FORES'S SPORTING NOTES & SKETCHES

32 TINTED FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

William Higgins.

W. HIGGINS.

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES & Sketches

A Quarterly Magazine

DESCRIPTIVE OF

BRITISH AND FOREIGN SPORT.

ILLUSTRATED BY

FINCH MASON, R. M. ALEXANDER,
CUTHBERT BRADLEY,
AND OTHERS.

VOLUME VI.

1889–1890.

LONDON:
MESSRS. FORES, PICCADILLY, W.
1890.

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LONDON:
Printed by STRANGEWAYS & SONS, Tower Street, Cambridge Circus, W.C.

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FORES'S
SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

OLD OXFORD DAYS.—The Last Gallop.

By 'Peckwater.'

> 'Laudator temporis acti
> Se puero . . .'—Hor.

'Of course the horses were of a better stamp and the fences bigger when the Governor was up,' mutters sarcastically an indignant youngster, after listening to the reminiscences of 'the old 'un,' when, over the mahogany, in the good old-fashioned style, the said Governor and an old crony or two were recalling days now long passed away.

Yes, my young friend, your respected parent can take you over a steeplechase course not very far from your home, and show you the sad wreck of a grand line of country over which Gaylad, Lottery, The Switcher, Proceed, The Chandler, Pioneer, Vanguard, Brunette, and other celebrities, have finished: these are the favourites he dreams of in his dotage, and challenges you to match. He would then point out to you the present course, and without further remark leave you to digest his arguments and draw your own conclusions as you please. Talking about the wreck of a course, how sad it is to visit a neighbourhood handed over to the mercies of a band of building speculators, and see the beautiful meadows one remembers, perhaps, as a schoolboy, cut up into streets and rows of jerry-built tenements! Bah! And then to have to live in one of those genteel villas, with walls one brick thick, and all their wretchedly skimped fittings! But this is what, when

> 'Land is gone and money's spent,'

a good many have to put up with, and are thankful (or ought to be) they have still even such a place of refuge as this.

To continue the comparison between the old and the new courses. Over the old line, or the remains of it, if you walked, you would find fences every one of which would require a well-made hunter to negotiate, a horse able to cover a wide distance, and clever enough to avoid the natural open ditches on the taking-off side; then about four hundred yards from the winning-post is a stiff stake and bound fence, with a wide ditch to be crossed on landing on to the race-course. No run home on the flat for a mile or so, with only gorsed hurdles to be brushed through. It was over such courses as this that the old steeplechaser had a chance of showing his powers. He was equally at home in the hunting-field, and could carry fifteen stone with ease to himself and comfort and delight to his rider. But look on the other picture.

'I don't care a straw for your brooks and big fences; I never go near them: it's the gaps and small ditches I'm bound to have that bother me.' So said the would-be sportsman in 'Silk and Scarlet.' And so it is here; the big line of country is carefully avoided; the distance cut down from four miles to two and a half, the larger part of which is on the flat over regulation fences consisting of gorse or other material, which horses brush through without altering their stride. Then the hurdles; they are certainly the regulation height above-ground, but are stuck in the soil so lightly that a gust of wind blows the whole lot over; and this style of obstacle is considered less risky than a flight of hurdles firmly set in the ground. But is it so? Stand by this last flight and watch. Yes; here is just a case in point. Three horses are racing home pretty close together; the leader hits the 'head' of a hurdle, up goes the affair, nearly on end, in front of the horse that is about half a length in his rear; he rises at it and, of course, comes an awful cropper, bringing, perhaps, another or two down with him.

But now we have to do with quite another line of country—the old Aylesbury steeplechase course.

Our friend, Ned Fortescue, had nearly arrived at the end of his academical career. He had come up to the University full of noble ideas and resolutions as to hard reading. Sport he would indulge in, merely as a recreation to brace him up for the efforts he meant to use to gain distinction in the schools, for Ned had proved himself a good scholar, and was quite capable of taking a forward place in the class list; but, somehow, these resolves had not been carried out, and here he was, at the close of his third year of residence, with the programme of the

Aylesbury "Aristocratic Meeting" before him, sorely puzzled how to secure a mount in the grand event of the day.

His own horse was hardly of sufficient form to enter, and he was well aware that, for this severe four-mile race, a horse must be thoroughly fit and good to have a chance to see the finish, especially as the company would be of higher class than usual, owing to several well-known public performers having been privately secured for this race.

'If Spenser would only let me ride his horse, or if George Symonds has not secured a jock for Young Lottery, I believe I could win on either.' Thus he speculated; but, on inquiry, it appeared that it had been taken for granted that he would ride his own horse, and neither of these mounts was open to him; so he had to look elsewhere.

There was a horse in Oxford at this time which few men cared to ride, belonging to an innkeeper who also had stables; professionals and amateurs had had a shy at him, and Ned Fortescue was the only man who could manage him at all. In an open steeplechase, during the vacation, he had ridden him and won, but on other occasions he had served him as he had done others—bolted right out of the course and galloped himself to a stand-still. No fence that a horse could jump or rush through would stop him, and he never turned his head from the most impracticable-looking obstacle. How this animal came into such hands was a mystery. He was perfectly sound, and Ned used to say, when he could put his hands down and let him sail away, he was the grandest horse to ride he ever crossed; he would go for a mile or two and not pull an ounce, then some evil spirit would possess him; he would get his head down between his knees and off he would rush, regardless of what might come across him. He, however, fortunately, had pace enough to take him clear of the rest of the field; and then if he could be kept between the flags, which was hardly ever the case he would run himself clean out; or as he served old Bob Barker at Newport Pagnell, where he bolted across country for miles and landed on the railway, when old Bob chucked himself off and let the brute take his own line. He had a narrow shave of a collision with a train, and was caught by a farmer miles away.

Well, after all his inquiries and offers, Ned Fortescue found that Topthorn was the only mount he could secure; so, rather than stand down in the last grand gallop over this unequalled line of country, he determined to risk it—his own neck he disregarded, the only thing he feared was a collision and doubling up some of the other horses and men.

Great was the disgust expressed by some when it was found that this runaway was entered.

'I thought there was no one fool enough to ride the brute besides old Bob Barker,' Captain Barlow exclaimed when the entries came out. 'However, Ned Fortescue will keep him clear of the ruck, and if he cares to risk his neck on such a demon that is his look-out.'

'Yes; and if I can keep the demon, as you call him, straight, I'll lead you such a dance as you never figured in before, my gallant Captain!' cried Ned, who overheard the remark.

'There are two awful doubles, aren't there? and however will you manage those at such a pace?' asks a youngster who was going to make his first appearance in silk on this occasion, and half repented of his resolve.

'You'll have a chance to see if you and I get as far,' laughed Ned; and he added, 'There's one thing I am sure of, and that is, unless the critter is clean pumped out it is almost impossible to get him down. He never even over-jumps himself; but unless you sit tight and are as strong as a bull, he will sometimes pull you clean out of the saddle, as I saw him serve Jack Frisby at Oundle. Yes; you want to be fit to fight for your life, and then you have some chance with him.'

At last the eventful day arrived; it was the 21st of March, and the ground was rather on the hard side; still there was nothing in the going to complain of. At ten o'clock in the morning the riders and others interested had assembled to walk over the line. Ned Fortescue took charge of the youngster, a nice plucky lad, and pointed out to him the various features in the course.

'It is all grass you'll see, and nearly an oval, the last half mile we cross, both at start and finish.'

'My word! all these fences want some doing. And what a beast of a place this brook is!' the novice exclaimed, as they drew near the water.

'Yes! it's nothing to jump, but being embanked on each side to keep it from flooding the low-lying meadows it requires care; it's just the place for a horse to over-jump himself at, and as we land on a bit of a slope are apt to peck forward if a mistake is made.'

Then, for a mile over open grass fields and strong fences, and the first of the doubles before mentioned is reached. In this, the thorn fences are so strong that some of the largest of the growers are cut out, but even now it is an ugly-looking place. Then, after a field or two, the second double, in all its natural hairiness, meets the eye—no gaps nor weak places here!

'Put all steam on or you'll not get through; and trust to your horse getting his hind legs on the bank: if he tries to fly it you are a "gone 'coon!"' was Ned's advice to his companion at this point.

Then, after a few fields all grazing-land, the turning flag for home is seen, and a straight run of a mile or so over stiff thorn hedges and wide ditches lands those who are lucky enough to get so far, into the winning-field. Having satisfied themselves as to the line of country, which looks decidedly formidable to the novice and others who have not crossed it before, they all hurry back to the 'White Hart,' don their racing toggery, and sit down to the good fare their hospitable landlady has provided for their luncheon. Of this tempting meal some few partake sparingly. Ned Fortescue is contented with a sandwich and a glass or two of champagne, while others make no disguise of their intentions to prime themselves well for the job on hand, and get up from the table in a most convivial mood.

You have only to observe them at the scales; and as they assist in saddling their high-mettled steeds note the difference between the fussy nervousness which Dutch courage affects, and the cool, unruffled demeanour of the old hands, who know nothing is more fatal to their chance than the 'jumping powder' some of the younger ones have indulged in. Now they take their canter, and proceed along the high road to the starting-field. Take them altogether, they are as good a looking lot of horses as you could wish to see. There is the handsome Tipperary Boy Tom Oliver rode in last year's Grand National, and who finished third to Miss Collingwood and British Yeoman at Worcester in the autumn: his rider, however, is not used to riding between flags, good man with hounds though he be. And here comes the favourite, Voyager, a black horse by Seahorse, ridden by his owner, a good man across country but terribly near-sighted. Of the rest the wiry Topthorn is decidedly favourite. Ned throws the reins on his neck and leans forward talking to him, as much as to say, 'See, I have every confidence in you. You can run away now if you like.'

'Keep clear of that brute Topthorn!' seems to be the order of the day as they settle into their strides; for Ned has a clear berth, and comes along a length ahead of everything. Over the first fence he lands, Topthorn just going up to his bit, and not pulling an ounce.

'This is delicious!' his rider thinks, but before the winning-field is reached for the first time a change has come over the spirit of the demon; a loose horse has rushed up alongside and races with him, the stirrup-iron dangles against his flank, and in a second all good behaviour is cast to the wind: with a savage snatch at the bit he gets his head down and is away. Young Lottery, for that is the loose horse, turns off for the town, and Topthorn means to follow; but Ned is one too many for him, and with his whip in the left hand gets him round the turning-flag and straight for the brook, the slight ascent to which is in his rider's favour: he is thus able to steady his horse a bit and prevent the catastrophe which seemed unavoidable. The clever brute narrowly escapes over-jumping, and nearly pulls his rider out of the saddle as he alights down the slope on the landing side. Ned rights himself, however, in an instant; but his horse has got his head down, and no power can alter that now; he can only just keep him between the flags and hold himself in reserve for any opportunity that may occur of getting a pull.

The first double is managed with a scramble; on making the bend Ned is able to see he is half a field ahead of anything. 'And, by Jove! if I can keep the brute straight, they won't catch me.' Such are his thoughts as he nears double No. 2. Here he is able to get a decided pull, the horse raises his nose some few lengths off the fence, Ned has him like a shot fast by the head and lands him safely.

'Now I am sure to win!' he mutters, and it really looks odds on him. The rest of the field have not regarded him as having any chance, but now they see they must catch him, or he will lose them; and those that can, begin to ride in earnest.

Ned is now nearing the turning-flag for home, his horse fairly in hand and going strong and well considering the mad gallop he has taken. 'If I do win, what a sell to all the clever ones!' Then, unfortunately, at this point a number of men on horseback were posted ready (as soon as the field came in sight) to gallop off into the road, which ran alongside the line to the finish; and Topthorn tried his best to join them. Get him round the flag Ned could not; about a hundred yards lower down he managed to pull his head straight for a tree and stopped him: but the mischief was done, for, by the time he had got back and round, some half-dozen of the others, with the favourite well placed, had entered the straight line for home, and Ned had to race to catch them. This was the effort he wanted in the winning-field when he was nearly overhauling Voyager, and was beaten by a length.

‘What a pity!’ he remarked, after weighing in. ‘Well! I was precious near winning, and my last gallop over glorious Aylesbury has been something to remember, at all events.’

Ned Fortescue had sat down to dinner in breeches and boots, and as soon as the toast of ‘The Queen’ had been honoured he jumped from his chair with a ‘Good-bye all,’ was downstairs and on the back of his galloping hack and on the road for Oxford before any of his friends could utter a word of remonstrance.

‘Well, this beats all! Whatever has come to the fellow? I thought he would have been sure to have finished the week in town with us!’ cried the chairman in perplexity.

‘But, you know,’ said the youngster—who, by-the-by, finished a good fourth in the big race and was not a little proud of his first attempt—‘Fortescue is engaged to one of the prettiest girls in our county, and there is a ball at Fairfield Hall to-morrow night, and he wants to be on the road early in the morning. He told me to say this and ask your pardon for behaving so shabbily.’

‘We’ll drink his health, for a better fellow never stepped,’ cried the chairman.

And Ned Fortescue and his Warwickshire beauty were toasted with all the honours and good wishes warm and generous hearts could bestow.

Poor Ned! his life has not been altogether in smooth places: in his worst troubles he has been heard to say, ‘Well! like an Aylesbury double they must be faced; throw your heart over and you’ll land somehow on the right side.’

THE POGGLEPORE CUP.

By ‘DOOKER.’

IT was guest-night at the mess of the Royal Slate-Pencil Dragoons. The wine had circulated a couple of times, cigars and cigarettes were in full blow, and conversation was in full swing. The talk was mostly horsey, for the Slate-Pencil Dragoons were eminently a horsey lot; and horseyist of all were Major Purvis and Captain

Quintin, the two great authorities in the regiment on all equine matters. These two gentlemen seemed to live only for racing, and though fair judges of a horse and good riders, as much could not be said for their military capabilities. Anyhow, on all matters connected with racing they thought no small beer of themselves, and imagined that any one who could manage to get six to four the best of them would have to be uncommonly sharp.

On the night in question the principal topic of conversation was the Pogglepore Cup, that was to be run for the following day, and which the Major and Captain Quintin both considered a certainty for the representative of their respective stables. Now this Pogglepore Cup was a very handsome piece of plate, added to a purse of 2000 rupees for 'maidens,' given by the Rajah of Pogglepore, a sporting native Prince. The conditions of the race were—four miles over the Pogglepore Steeplechase Course (which, of course, like all others in the gorgeous East, was a *made* one), English horses to carry 12 st., Australians 11 st. 4 lbs., and Arabs and country-breds 9 st. 10 lbs., for horses that had never before run in a race.

'Thank Heavens it's raining!' observed Major Purvis, as he heard the rain pattering down on the broad leaves of the mango-trees that surrounded the mess compound. 'I hope it will go on all night, and then your old crock won't have a chance against mine, Quintin.'

'Well, I don't know about that,' responded the person addressed. 'Vixen I know is a good mare, but I don't think she loves dirt, judging from the way you succeeded in being left behind on her in that run after a boar we had the other day, old fellow.'

'Oh, rubbish!' was the reply. 'That was owing to my infernal bad luck and through jumping into a paddy-field; and no horse that was ever foaled could gallop through dirt like that.'

'That's a very good excuse,' answered Quintin; 'but will you back your opinion? and if so, what odds will you give me against my horse?'

'Twenty to one in gold mohurs.'

'Done!' And the bet was booked.

Whilst this conversation was going on the speakers had been watched with apparent interest from the opposite side of the table by a fair-haired youngster, Ensign Fitzroy, of Her Majesty's

200th Foot, a very good specimen of that at present (thanks to Mr.—I beg his pardon, Lord Cardwell) extinct animal. In these days of progression and reform, a rank, and an honoured one of two hundred years' standing, must, like many other old customs and forms, be swept away, and a youngster on joining now blossoms at once into a position which, in the days I write of, was often not attained until after five, six, or seven years' service. However, to resume. Ensign Fitzroy, who came of a good old sporting stock, and knew a thing or two, had a very good idea of winning the Pogglepore Cup, but had kept his opinions to himself. When the rival dragoons had finished their little conversation he leant across the table and said, very innocently,—

'I beg your pardon, but were you talking about the big race to-morrow?'

The gallant dragoons in reply treated him to a supercilious stare. Here was impertinence! a wretched little Ensign of a foot regiment presuming to talk to *them* on such matters!'

Receiving no reply Fitzroy repeated his question, and adding —'I thought I heard you backing your mare, Major. If you feel inclined to do so again I shall be glad to name one against her. I think you said twenty to one? I'll be glad to take this five times against a horse I will name.'

All the dragoon subalterns stared aghast at this proposal; not one of them would have dared so far to question the gallant Major's judgment, and now for a Foot Ensign to do so! Oh! it was infernal cheek! The Major and Captain Quintin glared at the offender, but at last the ominous expression on the former's face gave way to a pitying smile, and turning to Quintin he said, 'The poor boy's had too much liquor; better get him home.'

Fitzroy heard this remark and said, 'No, sir, I've *not* had too much liquor, and again repeat my offer I'll take your twenty to one in gold mohurs that I will name a horse that will beat your mare Vixen for the Pogglepore Cup to-morrow, and am prepared to take it five times from you; and I daresay I can accommodate one or two others on the same terms. I will not mention my nomination, but will write it down on a piece of paper, which shall be put into a sealed envelope and left in charge of any of your brother-officers, but not to be opened until after the race. That's fair enough, I think.'

The Major and Quintin now began to get annoyed, and the former replied,—

'Well, I'll take you, as you insist on losing your money.'

'And I!' 'And I!' added Quintin and three or four others, anxious to uphold the honour of their corps.

The bets were accordingly booked, and the Slate-Pencil Dragoons between them stood to lose some hundred and twenty gold mohurs, about 216*l.*, should their champion fail to get Vixen's head first past the post.

An adjournment was then made to the ante-room, and Fitzroy duly wrote down the name of the horse he backed on a piece of paper, which was then put in an envelope, duly sealed, and handed over to the care of the Dragoon Adjutant—Beavan, by name.

The morning of the race broke fine and fair. It was towards the end of the monsoon, when everything was looking fresh and green, and beyond, perhaps, a few passing showers, no great amount of rain was to be expected.

Perhaps nowhere is racing so much fostered as it is in India. Every little station has its sky meeting, whilst the larger ones can boast of often two or three meetings in the year. Sky meetings are the fun, however. There, every one who owns anything in the shape of a horse or pony thinks it incumbent on him to enter, and often ride his quadruped in some of the contests; and frequently an animal that for the greater part of the year has been doing duty as a hack or buggy-horse is immediately put into what its owner considers 'training,' which, as often as not, consists in getting up at unearthly hours and bucketing the poor brute off his legs round and round the racecourse. However, they show great fun, these sky meetings, though the class of animal competing would cause some astonishment to the regular *habitués* of our English racecourses.

There is no regular betting in India as a rule, and such gambling as is inseparably connected with racing is carried on by means of lotteries; and if you want to back your opinion you must buy the horse in the lottery, paying the same sum to the lottery as you do to the man who has drawn him. If the horse wins you take the whole of the lottery, *minus* the second prize, if there is any, and a certain percentage off the total, which goes to the race fund.

After this digression I must proceed with the events of my story.

As I said before, the morning broke fine and fair, and the course, which was in capital going order, began about twelve o'clock to present a lively aspect. Crowds of natives, arrayed in raiment of all the varied and picturesque colours so dear to the Oriental mind; soldiers—horse, foot, and artillery; vehicles of every description, from the drag of the Slate-Pencil Dragoons and the English-built landau of the Collector Sahib, down to the buggy of some half-caste (I beg his pardon, *Eurasian*) shopkeeper, and the native 'ekha' drawn by bullocks or a diminutive, half-starved pony, bearing the form of some oily, corpulent 'baboo,' on pleasure bent!

Two bands discoursed alternately sweet music, and there were numerous itinerant vendors of 'metaie' or native sweetmeats, dear to the black palate, but unmitigated filth to European taste; and, of course, our old friends 'Bones and Sambo,' ably represented by some men of the infantry regiment quartered at the station.

One or two minor races had been contested, and then the bugle, which answered as a saddling-bell, sounded for the big race, viz., the Pogglepore Cup, for which eight runners figured on the card; but when the numbers went up only five were seen to be competitors, and faced the starter. These five were as follows:—Major Purvis's bay Waler-mare Vixen, 11 st. 4 lbs. (owner); Captain Quintin's grey Arab horse Emaum, 9 st. 10 lbs. (owner); Mr. Carthew's (200th Regiment) chestnut Country-bred mare Beebee, 9 st. 11 lbs. (Captain Shanks); Captain Bang's (R.A.) black Waler-gelding Colonist, 11 st. 4 lbs. (owner); Mr. 'Peer Bux's' grey Arab horse Kismet, 9 st. 10 lbs. (Kairoo).

Vixen was the favourite, and had been drawn in the lottery by a young subaltern in a native infantry regiment, and who, being in the usual state of impecuniosity peculiar to the 'backbone' of the British Army, had sold his chance to Major Purvis for 500 rupees.

Kismet had been drawn by the Cantonment Magistrate, a worthy gentleman from a social point of view, but who knew as much about a horse as of the navigation of an ironclad, and who had offered the horse at the lottery to any one for a 'chick' (four rupees); and no one seeming inclined to bid this, at the last moment Fitzroy became the purchaser.

Emaum had been also purchased by his owner, and of the others it matters not.

As the horses took their preliminary canter in front of the erection that did duty for a grand stand, Vixen's appearance elicited loud expressions of approbation, for she was trained to the hour and her action was perfection. Emaum came next, but though a fine horse his action was high and fighting, and, bar the intimate friends of his owner, he found but few admirers. The next two passed unnoticed, but when the little grey Arab Kismet came along, with short springing strides, there was a roar of laughter at the *tout ensemble.* His mane and tail were dyed a bright red, after the manner of natives; he had a native saddle on, and breastplate and reins much bedizened with different coloured worsted. His jockey was also a native. On his head a turban of red and gold, his jacket an old infantry mess-jacket with buff collar and cuffs, whilst his nether limbs were encased to just below the knee in a pair of old merino drawers, and the rest of his legs and feet *in puris naturalibus.* The little man himself looked more like a monkey than anything else, and his black coarse whiskers and upturned moustache, twirled up in a defiant curl, added to the ludicrousness of the scene as he cantered the little horse down the course, swinging a flail-like whip and yelling out 'Hi-hi!' at the top of his voice.

Some of the stewards had rather objected to let him start in such a queer get-up; but the horse had been duly entered and his stake paid, and they did not like to endanger the chance of the Rajah not giving the cup another year, by not allowing a native to enter a horse and ride, and therefore the objection was overruled, though some of the more haughty Britons muttered something about 'making the whole thing a d——d farce.'

The fences consisted of hurdles, a mud wall, some made fences of thorns, a double post and rails, and two water-jumps; and as the course was a circular one the whole could be seen from the stand.

The horses were dispatched to an excellent start, Emaum leading, boring and shaking his head, and taking all he could out of himself; then came Colonist, and the country-bred Beebee, Vixen, and Kismet, whipping in. In this order they proceeded till reaching the wall, when Emaum, chucking up his head, rushed at it like a maniac, and hardly rising an inch, carried away half of it, and came down a regular 'buster.' At the post and rails the country-bred declined, and at the first water-jump Colonist also refused, leaving the race practically between Vixen and Kismet. The gallant Major couldn't make it out. Here was this infernal nigger on his red-tailed horse sticking to him like a leech, so, letting his mare out, he endeavoured to increase his lead; but do what he would he could not shake off the little nag, who kept pegging away some two lengths behind him, taking all his fences faultlessly. At last came the second water-jump—a good sixteen feet of water, with some high-bushed hurdles in front of it, and then only a thorn fence and a flight of hurdles intervened between it and the winning-post. Some one hundred yards before reaching it the yell of 'Hi-hi!' smote on the Major's ears, and the next instant the little grey shoots past him like a flash, his rider grinning from ear to ear; and as he passes he places his hand to his forehead saying, '*Ram, ram, Salaam Sahib!*' gives his horse a couple of side-binders, and rushing him at the jump, all legs and wings, the little horse rises like a rocket, lands cleanly and cleverly with three feet to spare, and is off in his stride again in a moment!

Half mad with annoyance, the Major sends Vixen at the fence with all the energy that he could muster, and as he nears it raises his whip. Wind and pace were wanted to clear the jump, but the mare is done, and so is her rider; that extra cigar and B. & S. last night have told a tale. Vixen does her best, but jumps short; there is a splash and a scramble, and she and her rider subside struggling into the water, whilst the little Arab canters in an easy winner.

His victory is not received with an ovation by the European part of the spectators, though the native element are loud in their cries of '*Shabash!*' (Bravo!), and the grey is conducted back to scale by an enthusiastic native following. Yes, and *one* Englishman accompanies him—Jack Fitzroy, and as Kismet's rider stoops down to speak to him he might have been heard to say, '*Khub atcha, khub atcha, Kairoo!*' (Very good indeed; very good indeed, Kairoo!) The weights being all right, Kismet is declared the winner of the Pogglepore Cup.

Two or three other races are run, but with these we have nothing to do; so please, kind reader, accompany me to the Club House the following day, where the lottery is to be settled and the stakes paid over. All the cognoscenti are there—Purvis and all the Slate-Pencil Dragoons, looking very glum at their champion's defeat; Jack Fitzroy, spruce, quiet, but excessively pleased with himself, for he gets the lottery of course. To him thus speaks Purvis:—

'Well, young man, you've been very lucky in winning the lottery, but I expect now you'll have to pay up your bets; so it's just as well you've got some coin to do it with,' he adds with a sneer.

Well,' replies Fitzroy, 'I don't know about that; wait till Beavan reads out my nomination.'

'Here, Beavan, come on!' is immediately shouted in chorus; and that gentleman proceeds to carefully fix his eyeglass in his eye, '*more Masher*,' and taking out the envelope and its contents, begins to read :—

'I nominate my own horse, Kismet, a maiden Arab, entered under the name of Mr. Peer Bux, to win the Pogglepore Cup, and beat Major Purvis's Waler-mare Vixen.

'(Signed), J. FITZROY,
'*Ensign H. M.'s 200th Foot.*'

As he read, Beavan's eyeglass had dropped from astonishment, and as he concluded blank were the looks and loud the anathemas pronounced by the Slate-Pencils on the devoted head of Ensign John Fitzroy! That young gentleman, however, having been paid all his winnings, amounting to something close on 500*l.*, calmly lit a cheroot and said,—

'Well, gentlemen, I'm exceedingly obliged to you all; this money will pay for Kismet, and leave me a handsome balance: so I think I may as well tell you how the trick was done. When I landed at Bombay, some six months ago, on my way up to join, I heard about this race, and went over the Arab stables with a view to pick up something to run for it. There I saw Kismet, and was struck with his make and shape, and bought him for 900 rupees, with a promise to give the Arab merchant from whom I bought him half the stakes of the first race he won.

'I sent him to a cousin of mine to train, and engaged Kairoo, who rides all my cousin's horses in their gallops, to steer him. I knew you all to be a pretty sharp lot of fellows, and as I didn't want my horse to be known I entered under the name of Peer Bux. I had his mane and tail dyed so as not to attract attention, but the beastly stuff won't come out. You have all seen the horse in cantonments for the last fortnight, but he has had his gallops at Shikarabad, some ten miles from here, where I had a nice little course made, which is quite at your service whenever any of you like to use it. I know you thought me a young duffer, and so I kept quiet and didn't go blabbing and bucking about my horse, and I think now I've got the laugh on my side!'

And this was how Jack Fitzroy won the Pogglepore Cup!

THE HUNTING PARSON.

By CUTHBERT BEDE, Author of *Verdant Green.*

THE first portion of my notes on 'The Hunting Parson' appeared in the pages of this magazine (Vol. V. p. 229). I now continue, and conclude the subject, which, I venture to say, is one of great interest, both to the laity who hunt, and to those parsons who follow their example, and can acquit themselves with credit in the Hunting Field. As with all other vexed questions, this is one that can be regarded from several points of view, including the view-holla; and in bringing forward a goodly list of reverend gentlemen who have distinguished themselves in riding to hounds, I hope to amuse the readers of these pages—on both sides the Atlantic. It has taken me several years to get together the materials for these two papers, but my time and research will not have been wasted if they succeed in gaining the interest of my readers.

Early in this century there were very many well-known specimens of the hunting parson. There were the two reverend brothers Butler, familiarly known as 'Tom' and 'Billy,' of whom the latter was the more famous. He was of the Dorsetshire family of Butler, and formed the acquaintance of George the Fourth, when he was Prince Regent, and had a hunting-box at Critchill, Dorsetshire. Billy Butler was presented at George the Fourth's first *levée*, and was further presented to a valuable Crown living in Dorsetshire. Another Dorsetshire hunting parson was the Rev. William Chafin, Rector of Lidlinch, who died in 1818 at the age of 86. He was the author of *Anecdotes of Cranbourne Chase*, a book that Sir Walter Scott had intended to have reviewed in *The Quarterly* as 'a favourable specimen of the literary abilities of a fox-hunting parson of the old school.' One of his contemporaries was the Hon. and Rev. William Capel, who was not only Rector of Raine (in the county of Hertford) and Vicar of Watford, but was also 'Manager' of the Berkeley Hounds. A petition, signed Essex,' and dated 'Cashiobury, Nov. 12th, 1807,' was presented, to Mr. Capel, to which were appended such fanciful names as 'Baron Rip, Rev. J. Leap Frog, Sir Charles Vermin, Sir Ruby Beagle, Tobago Ginger, Esq., Sir Mango Bencoolen, Samuel Rat Tail, John Ferret,' &c.

The Rev. Sir Henry Bate Dudley, Bart., who died at Cheltenham in 1824, was Master of an Essex pack of foxhounds, in addition to being Rector of Bradwell-juxta-Mare (Essex) and Willingham (Cambridgeshire), and Prebendary of Ely. He was a notable man in many respects: the founder of the *Morning Herald*, part proprietor of the *Morning Post*, a duellist, and an agriculturist praised by Arthur Young. As a hunting parson, one of his famous runs with his own pack ended in the churchyard of Crickseth, Essex—or rather, on the chancel of the church: for the fox had swung himself up an ivied buttress, followed by Sir Henry and three couples of hounds that were lifted up to him; and the fox yielded up his life on the leads of the chancel. Another famous hunting parson was the Rev. John Bower, Rector of Barmston, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, well known in the foremost flight with the Holderness Hounds, and also at Melton, where no one could beat him on his chestnut 'Marquis'—so says 'The Druid.' In *Guy Livingstone* Mr. Lawrence describes his old Oxford friend, 'Jemmy' Allgood, a noted rider, who usually visited his outlying parishioners by going to them over hedge and ditch; as also did another rector, formerly known to me—one of the sporting family of Shafto. It was of a similar hunting parson that Whyte Melville wrote:—

'Come, I'll give you the health of a man we all know,
  A man we all swear by, a friend of our own;
With the hounds running hardest he's safest to go,
  And he's often in front, and he's often alone.
A rider unequall'd, a sportsman complete;
A rum 'un to follow, a bad 'un to beat.

'As he sits in the saddle a baby could tell
  He can hustle a sticker, a flyer can spare;
He has science, and nerve, and decision as well;
  He knows where he's going, and means to be there.
We threw off at the Castle, and found in the holt,
  Like wildfire the beauties went streaming away;
From the rest of the field he came out like a bolt,
  And he tackled to work like a schoolboy at play.

The Parson-Master in at the death.

see page 16.

'Twas a caution I vow; but, to see the man ride!
O'er the rough and the smooth he went sailing along,
And what Providence sent him he took in his stride,
Though the ditches were deep and the fences were strong.'

Another hunting parson was a Denbighshire vicar, 'Parson' Nanney, who also owned racehorses that were run in a layman brother's name, and was one of the characters at Newmarket, where he distinguished himself by subduing vicious horses. One of these racers was 'Vandyke Junior,' who was a perfect savage until taken in hand by 'Parson' Nanney, who himself rode him at Newmarket, in 1813, for the King's Plate. He lost the race by riding on the wrong side of the post. His cap and wig had fallen off, showing his bald head; and his racing jacket had slipped down. It would have afforded a subject for the pencil of Bunbury.

I have already spoken of the *Life of the Rev. John Russell.* There is another work, published in 1885 at 15*s.*, *The Russell Album*, with a biographical introduction by C. A. Mohun Harris, with a portrait and a series of hunting scenes from pen-and-ink sketches on Doileys, done by T. M. B. Marshall, a pupil of S. A. Hart, R.A. At the sale of Mr. Russell's effects there was a keen competition for the possession of these Doileys. Many other hunting parsons of the past half century might be mentioned—such as the three Yorkshire incumbents, Charles Johnstone, Peter Wilkinson, and 'Tom' Dayrell; also another Yorkshireman, the Rev. Edward Trueman, Rector of North Grimstone for fifty-seven years, where he died at the age of 81. He had been a pupil of Dr. Arnold, who summed up his character with the phrase, *Gaudet equis canibusque.* He was surpassed in longevity by 'Parson' Bullen, of Eastwell, who was known to the Belvoir, and began his eightieth year with the hounds in 1883. There is a poem on 'The Bedale Hounds in 1838,' written by the Rev. John Monson; and there are other poems and chronicles of runs to be found in the *Book of Hunting Songs and Sport*, by Mrs. Chaworth Musters—a contributor to this periodical—in which we find the names of some hunting parsons, including the following:—The Rev. J. W. Smith, Rector of Dinsdale; the Rev. H. O. Coxe, Librarian of the Bodleian and Rector of Wytham; the Rev. Hilgrove Coxe, his son; the Rev. Mr. Bramwell, Rector of Hurworth; and the Rev. J. Mirehouse, Rector of Colsterworth, who is mentioned in the volume as being in the first flight.

A distinguished American has given us an account of an English hunting parson. Mr. Charles Sumner, Senator from Massachussets, spent the Christmas of 1838 at Milton Park, near Peterborough. Mr. Sumner weighed sixteen stone, and had never been on horseback, but courageously accepted Lord Fitzwilliam's invitation to ride to hounds. Two weight-carriers were specially provided for him, and were sent on to the meet, to which Mr. Sumner was driven in a coach and four, with outriders. He got through the first day with success, but on the second he came to grief at a fence and brook. 'My horse,' he wrote to his American friend at Boston, 'cleared them both, and I cleared him, for I flew directly over his head. He was soon caught by Lord Milton and by a parson who had both made the leap successfully . . . . The best and hardest rider in these parts is a clergyman, and there was not a day that I was out when I did not see four or five gentlemen rejoicing in the prefix of reverend, and distinguishable from the rest of the field by wearing a black, instead of a red, coat. Once we came to a very stiff rail-fence; the hounds were in full cry; there was a general pause to see how many horses and riders would take it. Many were afraid, and several horses refused. Soon the Rev. Mr. Nash, a clergyman of some fifty years, came across the field, and a cry was raised, "Hurrah for Nash!" I need not say that he went over easily. None of the clergymen who were out were young men. Change the scene, and imagine our Mr. Greenwood or Dr. Lyman Beecher riding at a rail-fence, and some thirty or forty laymen cheering them on! The parsons mingled in all the light conversation of the field.' The Mr. Greenwood here mentioned was the Rev. Francis W. P. Greenwood, of King's Chapel, Boston, a celebrated American preacher.

The foregoing quotation from Mr. Sumner's letter to his friend Mr. Hillard will show how the exploits of English hunting parsons were regarded by an intellectual American statesman.

At least one instance is on record when a hunting parson may be said to have ridden into a living. The old Duke of Grafton, owner of the two famous racehorses, 'Whisker' and 'Whalebone,' when out in the hunting-field was thrown and flung into a ditch. Just behind him was a young man riding at full speed, who, with the cry, 'Lie still, your Grace, and I won't hurt you!' cleared both the ditch and the Duke. His Grace was so pleased with the young man's readiness and ardour that he inquired who he was, and finding that he was a curate, soon took the opportunity to present him to a valuable living. But the hunting parson may find himself landed in the ditch, as in Leech's famous sketch, where two red-coats, galloping across a field, turn to look at a black-coat flung into a ditch. 'Who's that in the ditch?' 'Only the parson!' 'Oh, then, leave him there! he won't be wanted till next Sunday!' A fine bit of sarcasm. I had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with John Leech, who, as a matter of course, did not invent all the sayings and ideas of his wondrous pictures, though he made them altogether his own by the force of his own splendid and original genius. Many of his *Punch* sketches were suggested by various correspondents—one or two by myself—or were derived from literary or traditionary sources. Thus I was able to tell him that not only his 'stinkin' wiolets' hunting picture, but also this incident of the hunting parson, was an old incident of an earlier period. The originator of the happy thought was Arthur Abbey, who was Huntsman to Sir Gilbert Heathcote, at Normanton Park, Rutland, when Sir Gilbert was Master of the Cottesmore Hounds, from 1799 to 1809. On seeing a hunting parson flung into a ditch, Arthur Abbey sang out to him, 'You can lie where you are, sir! you won't be wanted till next Sunday!' So the joke was made by Arthur Abbey upwards of half a century before it was cleverly appropriated by John Leech.

I was also personally acquainted with Anthony Trollope. I have breakfasted with him before he rode to the meet; I have talked with him by the covert side; and I have dined with him, and played whist with him, after the day's sport was over. More than once we discussed that vexed question of the presence of the (mounted) parson in the hunting-field. I quoted my own case. I did not ride to hounds, but, as I lived in the very midst of a famous hunting country, I was glad to see much of them, and occasionally to follow them on foot, as far as the powers of Shanks's pony would carry me. Moreover, I was among the original contributors to *The Field*, when it was started by Mark Lemon, with John Leech for its chief illustrator of hunting incidents; and among my very miscellaneous contributions were not only short stories, Society notes, archery, and cricket intelligence, but also hunting runs of that noted pack in the district where I then lived. These last accounts were compiled chiefly 'from information received'—as the police say—coupled with my own local knowledge.

'Now!' I said, 'where is the difference between myself and the Rector of Great Billing with Little Cooing, whom you saw in the first flight?'

'All the difference in the world!' replied Anthony Trollope, as he stood in one of his characteristic attitudes before the fire, his legs well planted out on the hearthrug, and speaking with the dogmatic air that I heard him use in political and other talk. 'The parson who goes through the day on horseback, and follows the hounds from the find to the finish, makes it very apparent that he has got himself up for business—a business that is not usually regarded as a strictly clerical business; and that he does not specially care for the opinions either of his Bishop or Mrs. Grundy; and that he has no particular parish work, for that day at least; and that he is certain to be out of the way if he should be sent for on any emergency. Now if he merely attended the meet, or walked for a certain distance on foot, he cannot consume so very much of his day; and, consequently, he cannot proclaim himself a thorough-going partisan of the hunting-field.'

But though Mr. Trollope in many of his novels has touched upon this theme, he condensed what he had to say on the subject in his paper, 'The Hunting Parson,' in the *Pall Mall* 'Hunting Sketches,' in 1869. He thought that a clergyman might hunt twice a week with less objection, in regard to his time, than any other man who has to earn his bread by his profession, and that, if the clergyman lives in the country, he can hunt cheaper and with less sacrifice of time than other men.

I reminded him that many who would object to a parson hunting would willingly permit him to fish—fishing being a sport that has been esteemed as singularly suitable for a clergyman—because, I suppose, it is so strongly connected with the idea of 'The Contemplative Man's Recreation.' And I brought to his memory what the poet Crabbe (in *The Borough*) said of a clergyman,—

> 'Fiddling and fishing were his only arts;'

and that Sydney Smith wrote from his Yorkshire Rectory to a friend, 'I give up fly-fishing; it is a light, volatile, dissipated pursuit. But ground-bait, with a good steady float that never bobs without a bite, is an occupation fit for a Bishop, and in no way interferes with sermon-making.'

Anthony Trollope owned that, for himself, he liked the hunting parson, whom he generally found to be the pleasantest man in the field, almost invariably riding well, and always enjoying the sport. Yet he was constrained to sum up his examination thus:—'The hunting parson seems to have made a mistake. He is kicking against the pricks, and running counter to that section of the world that should be *his* section. Whatever may be our walk in life, no man can walk well who does not walk with the esteem of his fellows.'

And that was evidently Bishop Fraser's opinion, when he gave up the pleasures of the Chase on becoming a clergyman, though he delighted in his personal reminiscences of the field.

BOXING.

By FREDERICK GALE.

AFTER languishing for many years, the prize-ring in the shape of glove contests under Queensberry Rules, has taken root more firmly than the old-fashioned prize-fights ever did within the last quarter of a century.

The extraordinary little hero, Tom Sayers, over eight-and-twenty years ago, who was under eleven stone in weight when he fought Heenan, brought every man in England down to his own level, or rather below it, except Nat Langham, who defeated him in 1853 (but who, declining a return match, left Sayers champion of the middle-weights); and in his contest with Heenan, which was usually called 'The Battle of Farnborough,' stood up for two hours and twenty minutes to a man who had the advantage of nearly five inches in height and over two stone in weight, *plus* the advantage of age—the American being six years younger than Sayers, who was twenty-four years old. Added to the odds which Sayers gave away in height and weight, his opponent was a fine boxer, and a blacksmith with a blacksmith's arm; and Sayers had the lower ground with the sun in his eyes, and his right arm was completely crippled by a chance blow early in the fight. Middle-aged men will remember how all England rang with praises of our English David against the Yankee Goliath. But, to give our American cousin his due, he was as game a man as ever lived, and took a tremendous amount of punishment unflinchingly; and, though Sayers was smaller in every way, he had had eleven years' experience against all the best men in the London ring, and was endowed with courage, coolness, and determination which were unparaleled.

It was prophesied at the time that the Anglo-American contest was practically the last of the great champion fights; as, indeed, was the case. Without the least wishing to depreciate subsequent doings, in which Tom King, Mace, Heenan on his return from America, and others took part, Sayer's last battle was the *very* last to be placed in the same category as the final championship fight between Spring and Langan in 1824, in which seventy-seven rounds were fought in 108 minutes, the science, condition, and endurance of the men being much on a par.

Jem Ward, Spring's successor as champion, was one of the gamest and quickest men ever seen, and according to old judges who saw both fight, their opinion was that Jem Ward's extra weight—at least a stone and a half in his favour—would have been so much more weight of as good metal as that which Tom Sayers carried, the pluck and courage of both being equal. It is impossible to compare the hero of 1860 with the hero of 1831, but those who really did know thought that Jem Ward, who sparred well even when in his seventy-ninth year, and was as quick as lightning then, was as wonderful a man, when younger, as Tom Sayers. Anyhow, when Sayers fought his last battle the hearts of all classes, ladies in drawing-rooms included, were with him, as the challenge came from America and the proof of the pudding was in the eating, and for once in the history of the world gratitude favoured the end of his career, as three thousand pounds were subscribed—and to a great extent by anonymous donors—and the money settled on Sayers for life, with remainder to his children in the event of his death or of his fighting again; in which case he forfeited his life interest. Tom Sayers was the only man to whom the same honour was paid as to the old Duke of Wellington. Whenever the Duke went into public the bands played 'See the Conquering Hero,' and when appearing in private, or on horseback, every loyal Englishman took off his hat to his Grace; and whenever Tom Sayers appeared in the streets in his swell trap, with his noble dog, a St. Bernard, sitting up behind, every one gave him a friendly greeting. From time to time fights took place after that great event, but they excited little public interest outside the small circle of those who frequented sporting-houses, or who had a primary interest in them; as, with the exception of all

Sayer's battles, which were all real and true, there had been from 1845 onwards much forfeiting and losses by foul blows and crooked dealings in connexion with many so-called 'champion' heavy-weight fights, which preceded that for the championship of England and America, that real sportsmen would not put down so much as a sovereign even for any match, and the stakes had to be found by frequenters of low fighting-men's houses and betting men. The money was found for Sayers quickly enough, and Tom King later on was well backed, but he was well known on the river.

Lots of matches for small stakes were got up by Jemmy Shaw for the amusement of the officers at Aldershot and other places, which never appeared in print; and these were *bonâ fide* contests between comparatively unknown light weights, and which were not crowded by the scum of London, who are the curse of all public sport. Jemmy also got together the school who sparred before the Shah of Persia in Buckingham Palace Gardens, and to this day no one really knows whether they had a round or two without the gloves on that memorable occasion or not. Accounts differ.

The ring was not actually dead, but in almost a dormant state, when the Marquis of Queensberry produced a new code for boxing competitions, the main features of which were that the men should contend for three minutes, coming up to time again immediately if knocked down; and at the end of three minutes one minute rest should be allowed between the rounds. These contests commonly are for three rounds in ordinary exhibition, and even in playing out byes for a fresh draw in the first round of a competition; four rounds in the second bout; and four or six as agreed for a final bout. Occasionally there have been contests under Queensberry Rules for a finish, and both men have suffered much from exhaustion.

There has been police interference in some of these glove contests, and the police seemed to gauge the illegality of the transaction by always giving evidence 'that there were sponges, buckets of water, seconds, &c., as in a real prize fight;' a ceremony which very few London bobbies probably ever saw, as they have been so few, and magistrates were apt to strain the law entirely against the parties concerned: but the doubts being very grave if the judges would not quash an indictment if the men wore ordinary boxing-gloves, the promoters of these sports have become bolder, and in April last there was a whole week's tournament at the Agricultural Hall, which was crammed nightly by immense crowds, in which men of different weights contested for prizes varying from three pounds ten, the *minimum* sum paid to the loser in his first contest for a place, to twenty-five pounds, which was the *maximum* prize to the best man in each class of weights who conquered in the last of four bouts, the 'runner up,' or second-best man of each class, who was the last of his class defeated, winning ten guineas. In fact, besides the *éclat* attending success before a large audience in London, and the newspaper glory consequent thereon, the money value was just enough to induce men to try, and not enough to turn a manly sport into a serious money business. The whole thing was 'entirely' (as Mr. Ruskin is so fond of saying) good and wholesome, and will, we all hope, be repeated in the same manner, and at the same prices, which on the first five nights ran from one shilling to five shillings, and on the last night, when the final bouts were played off, from one shilling to ten.

The American 'boom,' as it was called, when Kilrain the American announced his intention of coming over to fight Jem Smith the English Champion, was, as regards preliminaries, just the reverse of the invasion of England by Heenan in 1860. Kilrain was interviewed, exhibited, and mobbed in the streets; so much so, that in the neighbourhood of the leading sporting papers Fleet Street was impassable at times. Then came public exhibitions at the Aquarium and other places in London, endless speaking and 'champagning,' and flashing of diamonds, and offering big bets, and a blowing of trumpets, and firing of guns, so to say, as never were heard before. The Aquarium was crammed at double prices for admission, and double prices for seats, to see the unconquerable Smith spar three rounds, which were so short that the exhibition cost a shilling a minute almost, the admission being two shillings, and a seat two more. Afterwards appeared Kilrain, a lithe, powerful-looking man, apparently with a dash of gipsy blood in him, by all accounts very superior and well educated, and somewhat accomplished, who boxed with Charley Mitchell, who afterwards met Sullivan. Then came Sullivan, an enormous man, who came to whip creation, and who talked very 'tall talk,' who was not so warmly received as either of his predecessors. Finally came Smith and Kilrain after their fight; but *qua* a boxing exhibition it was a 'frost.' Anyhow the enormous crowd, amongst which were many country parsons and a very large number of respectable females, saw probably in the flesh for the first time real prize-fighters who were going to fight a real battle, and convinced themselves that they looked like ordinary human beings, and went back possibly under the idea that they had seen some really fine English boxing, whereas they had only seen two men who were going to fight, or who had fought, and really witnessed a money-making farce.

Doubtless this exaggerated importance which was given to the intended fight circulated an immense sum of money, and enabled many a poor fellow to pick up a little of it, and it did him good; and by general consent no one ran down the affair, though very few old hands believed in the reality of the fights. Of course it required great care and caution to bring the matter off, and suspicions were raised as to the *bona fides* of the fight, owing to the mutual mistrust of either partly in respect to the numbers who were to be present, and the quality of the spectators, and to the heavy sums charged for a chance of seeing the contest. Anyhow, the managers appointed by the press did 'their level best' for a fair fight if the combatants wished a regular go in.

The account of the journey over, the fight—which a few unfortunate Americans who had come over for the purpose were clever enough to miss—the unfortunate murder of an English reporter, are fresh in all our memories; but the accounts are so contradictory that no one can tell accurately whether it was a fight or a wrestling-match most. Anyhow, each gave the other one or two tremendous blows, and had many a good roll in the mud, and agreed to shake hands of their own accord; and there was an end of the matter beyond subsequent starring, an enormous consumption of champagne, exchange of diamonds, rubies, and all the precious stones ever heard of, and a subsequent spar between the two champions at the Aquarium. But as compared with the fight between Sayers and Heenan, and what we believe to have been the grand exhibition between Spring and Langan in 1824, which was attended by crowds of the best sportsmen in Europe, the Smith-Kilrain fight for the championship between England and America in 1887 was a frost.

Afterwards came the Sullivan-Mitchell affair, with an immense amount of newspaper artillery preceding it, and champagning, and blocking of newspaper offices again, and interviewing; the barring of certain parties to be present at the fight, the second flight to France, the second long struggle by the men in the buff, the second draw; the result being that in this, as in the preceding contest, not a farthing in stakes or bets has changed hands, as was the case when Smith and Garnfield met previously in France. Then came the interference of the French authorities, the locking-up of the combatants and others, a little official bullying and lodging of bail, the French authorities sticking to the bail, which must have been more ready money than they often see, and trying one or two of the parties behind their backs, and sentencing them to terms of imprisonment, which they are sure to suffer if caught on French territory, and that was all. The 'ring boom'—I rather like that word, even though it has become common—has given an immense fillip to glove contests, which are now as common as football matches, and which practically are about as rough as many of them. There are head centres in the East and West End, at which glove contests are publicly announced and openly conducted; our friend Policeman X being quite welcome to see all that goes on, and, as usual, getting a good place in front.

One of the oldest establishments in London is the 'Blue Anchor' in Church Street, Shoreditch, where the late 'Bill Richardson,' a much-respected landlord, reigned for very many years till his death a year or two back, without ever having had a word of complaint against his house, which was a 'fighting-house,' and where he has been succeeded by his former manager, Tom Simmonds. Here on a Saturday night, at ordinary sparring exhibitions in the common room, or in his saloon upstairs, where grand competitions may be seen conducted by many of the first boxers of the day, the greatest quiet and order are preserved, no shouting or 'jollying' being allowed; and there is an utter absence of wrangling or unseemly noise; and for those who drink it, the liquor is pure, good, and reasonable, and you never see a semblance of drunkenness or bad conduct. It is a place where manly sport is honestly conducted. This is one of many places, but the one I happen to know best. There are in the East End much less pretentious places at very small rate; for instance, 'The Belmont Music Hall' in Hackney, where the admission is sixpence to the boxes, fourpence to the pit, and twopence to the gallery, and where boxing—but very good boxing by good men—forms only a small part of the entertainment. The audience, of course, consists of by no means 'swells,' but at the same time men who know how things ought to be done; but the order and decorum are as great as at the grander places. And having sampled the exhibitions pretty carefully, I am convinced that good stiff boxing, with plenty of give-and-take for a few rounds, is a very fine substitute for the prize-ring, and entertains and instructs a large number of people, and does a great deal of good and no harm. It is manly, and not demoralising like some of the slang songs with sly innuendoes sung by females at low music-halls, and so-called dancing by women with the scantiest possible drapery. If gentlemen who talk in Parliament about brutality and demoralisation of the lower orders (those hateful and unchristian words!) would go and see how admirably they keep order amongst themselves, we should not have so much rubbish talked. If any one will speak to a costermonger as civilly as he would speak to a duke, he will be astonished to find how much civility and good-breeding there are in fustian and corduroy.

As to the old art of self-defence, it is a thing of the past; or rather, entirely altered. The stopping and guarding are superseded by dodging and hitting. It is wonderful how the men duck their heads out of danger and let fly, and duck again and are up the other side; but the hitting is tremendous, and body blows come off more frequently than flush hits. If the upper-cut and round-arm hits often came off, you would hear of men being knocked through the wall by a round-arm hit, or through the ceiling of a jerry-built house by an upper-cut. The fact is that these hits very seldom come off, and if they do, the recipient as often as not experiences a 'knock out,' and is saved further trouble.

Sometimes a man gets a facer with the gloves which knocks him out. The worst results that I have ever seen have been a black eye or bloody nose, and they are part of the game. I think in a competition three rounds, and one more if the referee is in doubt, are just enough for a quick bout, as at the end of the third round frequently both men are pumped; for if the bout is for a place for a prize, and that is a contest for a series of three bouts, each will try to knock the other out. It is very pleasant to see how heartily the combatants shake hands at starting, before the last round, whatever the number of rounds may be, and after the referee (who decides by points) has given his award; and the whole affair looks exactly what it is in reality, a manly contest for superiority between two fine young fellows, most of which class have regular work in docks, or markets, or factories, and who follow boxing at the places of public entertainment partly for the love of the sport and glory, and partly also for the emolument; for, win or lose, they all get paid. And let me ask, Which is best for a young Englishman, a manly bout with the gloves under fair rules before his fellows, or a sottish debauch in a reeking, gas-lit room?

Of course there are some hangers-on whose language is not what one would like, but much of that language is heard in all crowds. As a class the modern boxers seem as quiet and orderly in manners and conversation as the rest of the world.

There may be times and seasons when a merry mill on the quiet is excusable in some out-of-the-way districts where no one is annoyed, but a glove contest is far preferable according to modern science, for a prize-fight must be an unmerciful pounding match if men toe the scratch, or else a half-wrestling, half-trotting, and hugging match, as the old-fashioned attack and defence is stone-dead and buried. Our forefathers looked for science, and not slogging.

If I were a magistrate, and a lot of rowdy, so-called sporting men brought a ruffianly mob into a quiet village for a fight, I should serve all parties just as if they had been promoters of a dangerous mob like that in Trafalgar Square, and dance they should on the mill. But if Policeman X, 'from information he received,' found a lot of young fellows right away in the marshes settling a quarrel for a fiver and the honour of victory, I should require the *most* accurate proof of every detail and identification of every man brought before me; and probably Justice would be a trifle blind, as I should weigh their offence in the balance against the possible outrage of a man drawing a knife, and I am not sure that I should not consider the State a debtor to the pugilists who had set a good example of fair play.

Let us hope that no attempt will be made to stop glove contests 'openly and honestly conducted,' as some M.P. recently suggested. If I am not very much mistaken, one of the objectors in Parliament was one of a leading political faction who attempted to disturb a Conservative meeting in St. James' Hall some years since, and was moved into the chair by amendment carried by his friends, and attempted to go with his party on the platform, on which were many of the younger members of the upper ten who had dropped in from the clubs. According to the account of one of the morning papers—the *Times*, I think—it was stated that the aggressive intending chairman on mounting the platform was received by what is styled in the prize-ring 'a whistler in the teeth.' I will swear to the last five words appearing in the report in connexion with the assault, and I certainly read in the

Parliamentary Reports not long since something about objections to glove-fighting by a gentleman who has the same name as the receiver-general of the 'whistler in the teeth.' If you try to disestablish the class from which some day you may want volunteers who will swarm up a ship's side or rush into a battery, you will, by stopping glove contests, put down all these noble tests of real courage, stamp out the class who would face shot and shell fearlessly; for it requires a good deal of courage for men to stand up for three rounds, even if three minutes each, before an antagonist who goes for a 'knock out.'

No one ever knew exactly how many assembled at the Agricultural Hall to see the tournament. From a seat in a side-gallery, which I occupied during four nights of the contest, with an admirable view near one of the corners of the ring, which was a splendid old-fashioned four-and-twenty-foot ring well built on a stage, I counted the crowd immediately underneath, and, as far as I could see, they were eleven deep all round the barriers of the enormous arena, so that every nine men standing at the barrier reckoned for a crowd of ninety-nine people, including those behind them. The centre of the arena was well filled, and every gallery was crowded. If I were to bet on the matter, and it could be proved, I should say that there were nearer twenty than fifteen thousand present. The thing which astonished us most was, that after the specimen of drawing-room bogus boxing which we had seen at the Aquarium, when Jem Smith the champion appeared, we found a brand new Jem Smith, in the same skin apparently, and with the same features, hair, &c., but utterly different in tactics from the Jem Smith whom we saw at Westminster; for our Jem Smith at the tournament, who played three rounds of exhibition sparring, gave one of the most brilliant specimens of quick and determined hard hitting, guarding, and dodging, that any one could see. His antagonist was his brother Tom, very like him, and a bit smaller; but the two brothers went for each other as if they were fighting for a kingdom, and boxed the full three rounds of three minutes each, and brought the house down most deservedly. If Cain and Abel had used the same weapons history would have been different. I do not think that any glove contest for courage and endurance need ever exceed six rounds, for the exertion of doing that task must be tremendous; and, except by extraordinary accident of condition, or a chance fall, &c., a fatal termination is almost impossible, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a man is none the worse. These contests should be for very reasonable stakes—say twenty-five pounds as a maximum—and the less the betting-ring have to do with them the better. Heavy betting has almost ruined fair racing, and withers every sport which it touches. Observe that in old-fashioned books cudgelling, wrestling, and boxing with gloves, were called 'play.' 'Light play' and 'heavy play' were the common terms, and these expressions are quite applicable to modern glove-boxing. It is play, and rough play. On the whole I am quite satisfied that by far the largest amount of boxing, honestly conducted, is manly and straightforward sport, and long may it flourish. Champagne and diamonds are utterly out of place in our old English sports; and I like the old-fashioned custom of staking bank-notes, as cheques may or may not be real—but there is no mistake in a flimsy!

GILLYFLOWER'S GOVERNESS.

By FINCH MASON.

WHEN my old friend Gillyflower lost his wife, I have no hesitation in saying that he was the most disconsolate man (to all appearance) to be found, I was going to say, in a day's march; but I will go further than that, and say, in the whole of these realms. Such profound grief as his I don't think I ever beheld, when, a month after the sad event, finding myself in his immediate neighbourhood on a visit to a mutual friend, I took the opportunity of riding over and paying the bereaved widower a visit of condolence. I found poor Gillyflower—who, I may mention, *en passant*, amongst other virtues, possessed a great loving for pounds, shillings, and pence—seated on a corn-bin in the stable, smoking a cigar, and sadly contemplating a remarkably good-looking and well-bred chestnut horse with a very wicked eye, who occupied the stall in front of him.

'Oh, my dear friend,' exclaimed Gillyflower, rising from the corn-bin as I made my appearance, 'this is indeed kind of you! *She* was always pa-pa-partial to you, Spooner.' (This was hardly correct, for to say the truth, the lamented lady and myself never hit it off very well together.) The widower here turned away his head, unable to say more, and I was much affected 'I was only thinking,' went on my poor friend, recovering himself a little; 'I was only thinking when you came in what on earth I should do with that chestnut horse now she's gone. You know what a t-t-treasure she was, Spooner, and what a horsewoman! She was the only person who could ever ride that chestnut you see in that stall. Had she lived, she would have s-s-sold him for three hundred, and now only one man will go near him in his stall, and not a soul on the premises dare get on his back, and I shall never again see even the money I gave for him.'

I ascertained not long afterwards that Gillyflower had picked up the wicked chestnut at Tattersall's one Monday afternoon for the modest sum of a pony; but he had since carried the late Mrs. G., who was the only person who could manage the brute, so splendidly to hounds, that her husband, who dearly loved a deal, and generally had one or two rum ones in his stable he could accommodate a friend with wanting to increase his stud, opened his mouth wider than usual, and, after a tremendous run the hounds had one day from Tackley Wood, when Mrs. Gillyflower showed them the way on Rob Roy—the chestnut in question—he boldly asked three hundred on being asked to put a price on him.

'No, no; come in and have some luncheon,' said Gillyflower, when, having done the stud, I announced (not caring to force my company on my bereaved friend at such a time) my intention of starting on my homeward journey. And as Gillyflower evidently meant it, and I, besides being somewhat sharp set, was always a dead hand at luncheon, the order for my hack was countermanded, and I gladly accompanied my host into the house. Luncheon was shortly afterwards announced, and I may here remark that, for a man so completely prostrated with grief as Gillyflower appeared to be, he managed to use his knife and fork in about as workmanlike a style as ever I saw. I could have wished, I must say, for the conversation to have taken a more cheerful turn, but it was not to be, and perhaps it was wrong of me to expect it. The lamented lady, in fact, was the sole theme of conversation during the repast.

'One of poor dear Louisa's favourite dishes,' said Gillyflower, helping me to a *cotelette à la Soubise* from the dish in front of him. 'This, too, was the only champagne she ever touched; most ladies, as you know, like their champagne sweet, *she* liked her's dry.' Showed her good taste, thought I, as the butler once more filled my glass with '74 Giesler—hard indeed to beat.

'And now,' said I, 'what do you intend to do with yourself for the future. You mustn't mope, you know, old fellow, or you'll be ill. Take my advice, go abroad; get change of scene'—I was going to add, 'and forget Mrs. Gillyflower,' but luckily just checked myself in time.

He replied with a deep sigh, 'No, my dear boy, I shall hang on here. It will perhaps comfort me to take upon my shoulders some of the domestic duties in which she was so capable. You don't know what a treasure that woman was, Spooner. Never was a saying so true as that "You never miss the water till the well runs dry." She managed the home-farm, stables, even the shooting she took under her wing. Not a single plan of her's shall be altered; every arrangement of poor Louisa's shall be carried on just as if she was here among us.' Here Gillyflower with an air of abstraction, producing a cigar-case from his shooting-jacket pocket, offered me a regalia, and lit one himself. ('Hallo,' thought I to myself, 'it's lucky dear Louisa is *not* among us just now; she wouldn't have stood smoking in her dining-room, I'll go bail.') 'No, I shall provide a governess for the dear girls' (Gillyflower had three daughters), 'and drag on my miserable life as well as I can. They tell me I shall get over it in time; some of my friends even go so far as to express a hope that I shall some day marry again; but the wound has gone too deep for that, Spooner. All zest for enjoyment has gone from me for ever. The contented, I may say merry, country gentleman' (Gillyflower was in the Yeomanry, and could sing a song with the best of them) 'is changed into a blighted being, and I feel I can never be my proper self, or resume my old, cheery habits again.' As proof of which 'the blighted being,' going to the table, poured out a large glass of brown sherry and drained it at one gulp.

'Nonsense!' exclaimed my friend and host, Tom Wagley, when, on my return to his hospitable mansion, I proceeded to describe to him the desponding condition of our poor friend. 'Nonsense! don't you tell *me*. Why, it's notorious that the late Mrs. G. ruled the roast to such an extent that the poor old man dared not say his soul was his own. Couldn't smoke a cigar or drink an extra glass of champagne without asking her leave. To do her justice, though, she could ride—never saw such nerves or such hands on a woman in my life; and that, I suspect, is where the shoe pinches in reality. She used to sell all the brutes old Joe was always picking up for about five times what they were worth, simply through showing them off so well; and as a deal is Joe's one hobby, no doubt he feels the loss of her very much. He's got a perfect demon of a chestnut horse at this moment' ('Rob Roy,' thought I) 'who he has the cheek to ask three hundred for; and, indeed, all but succeeded in sticking into me, only I happened, quite by chance, to find out all about him one fine day, otherwise I was as near buying him as a toucher after seeing him go one day in a run with Mrs. G. on his back, when the pair fairly pounded the field, and had it all their own way. But, as for affection! pah! Why, she was as plain as they make 'em, and was nagging at poor old Joe from morning till night. No, no, don't you believe it. Joe's grief won't last long, depend upon it. You see, he'll be as jolly as a sandboy by the time the Yeomanry are out next summer, and be singing his one song of "Tally ho, the Hounds, Sirs!" in greater form than ever o' nights (you must really come and dine with us during our next training, old man); and as for his remaining single, why, I'll take short odds—to money, too—that the old hypocrite marries again before a year has gone by. He's going to get a governess for his girls, you say? Well, if he gets a good looking one, by Jove, he's as likely as not to marry *her!* He's a susceptible gent, I can tell you, is our old friend, and as he's got lots of money already, and consequently don't want any with his wife, the first good-looking girl that makes a dead set at him is very likely to nail him, in my opinion, and a good job too. A lively wife, with a partiality for gaiety, who would turn his house topsy-turvy periodically, and make him entertain as he ought, would do him all the good in the world.'

That Tom's way of speaking was plain truth, there could be no doubt; and in turning over the matter in my mind, I could not help thinking that in all probability he was not far off the mark when he described our mutual friend's grief as, in all probability, not of a lasting nature. I was reminded, too, of a similar case which had come under my notice only a short time previously with another friend of mine, which had gone a good long way to convince me that man's constancy is invariably but so so.

As the ladies are fond of saying, 'men were deceivers ever;' and I won't contradict you, my fair friends, but say with the French, '*Vous avez raison, mesdames.*' At the same time don't think me rude in saying that, in my opinion, you are all of you just as bad as we men are supposed to be. But to the case in point.

Walking up St. James's Street one fine day, I ran up against a tall man just turning out of Jermyn Street, clad in such painfully deep mourning that, for the moment, I was quite startled. I was about to beg the spectre's pardon and resume my way, when a voice sadly murmured, 'How do you do, Spooner?' I looked at the spectre's face. Could that pallid countenance and thick drooping moustache hanging over his mouth like a weeping willow over a stream, those sad-looking eyes, those measured accents, belong to my friend Loosefish, jolly Jack Loosefish, late of the —th regiment? Another glance announced that they did. And now I recollected having seen in the paper a month or so back that Jack, who I knew had married for money, had lost his better-half, and at the same time wondering if she had left Jack her money.

'You know who I am in mourning for, you saw it in the newspapers, no doubt,' said my friend, with a sigh. I, of course, made use of all the expressions of condolence at my command. 'You are not a married man, I know,' continued poor Loosefish. 'I'm glad for your sake, old fellow, you are not; for to lose a wife——; but, good-bye; excuse me, old fellow, won't you, the subject is a very painful one with me just now, and that one word "wife" is too much for me. I am not strong enough yet to discuss my grief even with such an old friend as yourself.' And shaking me by the hand and blowing his nose hastily with a snow-white handkerchief, Loosefish turned abruptly away, evidently quite overcome by his feelings, and walked slowly off.

'Poor, poor fellow,' murmured I, as I looked after his departing figure; and as I, too, turned on my way, I found myself blowing my nose hastily—sympathy, no doubt. Do what I would I could not get my *rencontre* with poor Loosefish out of my head for ever so long that day.

The next evening—it was Sunday—a friend and myself hied us, by way of doing something cheerful, to a certain well-known French restaurant in Regent Street, there to partake of a nice 'little dinner.' We were so busy with the contents of our sundry toothsome little French dishes that we did not trouble ourselves to look about us until the ice pudding stage. My companion was the first to adjust his *pince-nez* and look about him. 'That,' said he, as he sipped his glass of green chartreuse, 'seems a lively pair over there in the corner. They appear, by the noise they are making, to be enjoying themselves, don't they? Lord, how the lady is pitching into the champagne! Just look at 'em! Ha, ha; she has just shied a strawberry at her young man, and it's gone right on his shirt-front.'

By this time, having finished my own ice pudding, I turned round also to have a look.

Could I believe my eyes? They never deceived me yet, so why shouldn't I? Yes, I blush to relate it.

There, seated opposite a vivacious young person of the opposite sex, clad in the most gorgeous raiment I had ever beheld, and possessing cheeks that could have achieved the bloom they possessed by no other than artificial means, with the most beautifully pencilled black eyebrows, and a mass of yellow hair quite dazzling to the view, and laughing ready to kill himself at some witticism that had just fallen from the vermilion lips of his fair companion, sat Loosefish. But what an altered Loosefish! No longer the disconsolate, broken-hearted Loosefish of yesterday, with drooping moustache and tearful eye, but the jolly Jack Loosefish of old times, with his moustache *piqué a la mousquetaire*, a festive flower in his button-hole, and the devil-may-care air that a man puts on when he has got rather more than his share of a magnum of champagne under his belt, which I fancy was his case at that identical moment.

Oh, Jack, Jack, what a humbug you are! thought I, as I again turned round, and called for just one more glass of that dry curaçoa previous to going out into the cool air to enjoy our cigars.

When I thought of the uncurbed ebullition of grief evinced by my friend Gillyflower, I can hardly be blamed if, like Tom Wagley, I found myself rather in doubts as to his sincerity.

* * * * *

Just eight months after my morning call of condolence on the widowed Gillyflower, it is Christmas time, and I find myself once more a guest at the hospitable mansion of my friend Tom Wagley.

Almost my first business on the night of my arrival, when left to our two selves after dinner, was to inquire of Tom concerning the welfare of our mutual friend, Gillyflower.

'Had he got over his sad loss?' I asked, feelingly.

'What, old Joe!' exclaimed Tom, with a yell of delight. 'Didn't I tell you how it would end? Never was such a game in this world I verily believe. Joe's got the governess he spoke to you about; such a governess, my boy! Rides all Joe's horses, and goes out hunting regular. What do you think of that? Look here, I told you the last time you were here I would take odds Joe was married within the year. I'll *lay* odds now—and long ones, too,—that he marries Miss Brown, that's the governess's name, within the time I have named; and quite right, too, I say, for she's a deuced pretty girl, and *can* ride I can tell you. In fact, she's literally ridden herself into our friend's affections. You remember that brute of a chestnut horse of his, Rob Roy, which he tried to plant me with, well, he half killed one of his men one day in the stable, and, as not a soul would go near him at last (a man used to feed him by chucking over his hay and corn from the next stall), he was at his wits' end to know what to do with him, and thought seriously of having him shot where he stood. At this juncture Miss Brown appeared on the scene.'

'What! the governess?'

'Sent in her compliments, if you please, by the footman, so the story goes, and she would be very glad—having had a large experience with horses—to try her hand with the redoubtable Rob Roy. Mr. Gillyflower could scarcely believe his senses. However, the beast was saddled somehow or another with the aid of ten men and a boy, Miss Brown was duly hoisted into the saddle, and the whole establishment turned out to see her killed, as one and all prognosticated she would be. Not a bit of it, my boy. Miss Brown had not been on Rob Roy's back ten minutes before the pair were the best friends imaginable, and after turning him and twisting him about at her wish, as if he was the quietest beast in England, Miss Brown sends him slap at the deer hurdles in the park. The way they cleared 'em was a caution, Spooner. Joe's head man said he never saw such a jump in his life. No wonder, though, the horse jumped, being cooped up in the stable as he had been for months, eh? Ever since then she has had the run of the stable, as you may readily believe; rather to the detriment of the young ladies' lessons I should imagine, but no matter; and our dear friend Gillyflower amuses himself by hunting about for all the incurables he can lay his hands upon for the Governess—the *Governess!*' repeated Tom, cracking with laughter,—'to try her hand upon. The best of the joke is that old Joe, thinking my lady had quite tamed Rob Roy, thought he would ride him

Miss Brown makes acquaintance with Rob Roy

see page 36.

himself one day with the hounds. He did, and the brute fell at a fence and went at old Joe on his knees as he lay on the ground, and if they hadn't flogged him off, I do believe he'd have made a meal of him then and there. In order to school his horses better, Joe has now started a pack of harriers on his own account, and he and Miss Brown go galloping and jumping to their hearts' content, and the only wonder to me is that he hasn't popped the question long before this. Anyhow it's only a question of time. It *must* come off; the whole county is agreed upon that point. I'll tell you what it is,' went on my host, 'there's no hunting to-morrow, and I don't want to shoot until the people come next week, so what say you to cantering over to-morrow morning and drawing Joe for lunch. We can then be introduced to the future Mrs. Joe, eh?'

I at once seconded the motion, for I was dying with curiosity to see Miss Brown. Accordingly, the next morning, after breakfast, we mounted our steeds and set off *en route* for the Gillyflower mansion.

'Surely I hear hounds running,' I exclaimed, suddenly, pulling up my horse by the side of the road to listen.

'So do I,' said Tom, doing likewise; 'and I'll bet anything it's our friend and Miss Brown having a turn with the harriers I spoke to you of. Let's pull up, they are coming this way I feel sure.'

Five minutes more and sure enough they hove in sight; going faster than any harriers I ever saw, too.

'They must have a thundering good hare in front of 'em,' remarked Tom; 'or else, what is more than likely, they're running a drag. We'll join in with them when they come up. That's a capital jumper you're on, and this is a new one I'm on, and I want to try what he's made of, so it will just fit in. It *is* Joe and Miss Brown, too; so we're in luck.'

Sure enough in another minute the hounds flew the fence into the road in a body; close behind them rode a little lady in a brown habit, on a good-looking chestnut horse, which I recognised as my old friend Rob Roy, and behind her again, his face all aglow with health and happiness, galloped my old friend Gillyflower; behind him sundry grooms, and a stray farmer or two.

'How are you?' shouted he, as he sighted me on landing. 'Come along; we're running a drag, and have only got another mile to go.'

He was over the opposite fence before I could reply; so, following Tom, I galloped along in his wake, Miss Brown acting pioneer to the lot of us. At the end of four large pastures the hounds came to a full stop, and the hunt was over for the day.

Then the man who had taken leave of the world came up and shook us both warmly by the hand, and then, with a sly twinkle of his eye as if wondering how I would take it, introduced me to the lady in the brown habit, whom, I regret to say, I fell in love with at first sight.

'My old friend Spooner—Miss Brown, my daughters' governess,' said Gillyflower,' and in five minutes we were the best of friends.

'And now, you fellows, come along and have luncheon, and whilst I am about it I'll tell you both a bit of news. All right, Dora, don't be shy'—Miss Brown had suddenly commenced to colour up furiously—'the murder must out, for I can't keep it to myself any longer. This lady you see before you has promised to be my wife, and it only rests with her now to name the day. Tom, what do you think of the arrangement, and you Spooner, old boy, what say you?'

'That you're a lucky dog,' exclaimed I.

'That's it's deuced lucky for you I'm a married man, for I've lost my heart to Miss Brown ages ago,' replied Tom, gallantly, laying his hand on his heart in mock devotion as he spoke.

In due time we four, as jovial a quartette as ever trotted along together, reached the Gillyflower mansion, and were soon seated at the luncheon table armed with the ferocious appetite of the proverbial hunter. And you may be sure our host fetched out his very best champagne (the lamented Louisa's favourite tap, indeed) for us to do full justice to the toast of 'Miss Brown, the future Mrs. Gillyflower.'

MELTONIANA.

By Tom Markland.

IF Squire Osbaldiston could revisit the glimpses of the moon he would find much change externally in the dear old hunting capital. He would have to become accustomed to the shrieking of the engines on two busy lines, to seeing friends turn up at covert in response to a wire received whilst eating their matutinal meal in Pall Mall, to a mass of correspondence on the breakfast-table every morning, which used to be spread over a month, and he would puzzle his old brains in vain to discover what could have possessed the asses to bother him with 'all that nonsense;' and the first time a frost set in, and he naturally expected to cheat old Time between the pigeon-traps and the cock-pit, he would find to his dismay that he was the only man left in Melton, all the others having either gone to clubland, or after the longtails in the coverts of one of the ancestral houses which stud the country from lordly Belvoir to the Welland and Watling Street.

Other changes might be enumerated, but on examination we shall find that they are all of a nature that rendered their acceptance imperative, and that Melton Mowbray has really submitted to only the minimum amount of 'improvement.' Should one of those incarnations of self-conceit, who are constantly informing the world that they 'move with the times,' crop up on the banks of the Eye, he will be allowed to do a lot of talking, which will have about as much effect on the shrewd conscript fathers of the famous little town as Sir Wilfrid Lawson's favourite beverage has on the dorsal arrangements of a duck. How will it affect the season? that is the question, and it is a question they have managed to solve fairly well from generation to generation. Attempts have been made to wrest the supremacy of the chase from Melton Mowbray more than once, but never with success; and, though this is to a great extent due to its advantageous position, it is also in a measure the result of constant precaution on the part of those whose interests are bound up in the place. Standing, as it does, at the junction of the countries of the three crack packs, the Belvoir, Quorn, and Cottesmore, on the southern boundary of the princely appanage of the house of Manners, in a county that 'boasts of old houses in hosts,' surrounded by a sea of green pastureland, famous for the most part as holding good scent, with the prestige of a long and glorious past, it seems wellnigh impossible to find within the four seas so attractive a home for the men of 'hound and horn;' and he would scarcely be deemed a rash prophet who opined that when the Melton stalls become deserted the favourite pastime of the English 'classes' will be among the things that were. Short, however, of actual decadence, the minor evil of slack seasons is to be guarded against by a community whose revenues are dependent on the votaries of the chase, and to this end greater care than in days of yore has been exercised in the building of new hunting-boxes to provide for the larger 'fields' that file to Kirby Gate on the 'first.'

It is easy to build a house and add grounds, stabling, &c., but you may build too many, and you may build them in the wrong places. I remember a go-ahead gentleman in the building line coming down to 'show the Meltonians a thing or two,' and he got hold of a 'slow-coach' who had a grass field on the Nottingham road that looked an undeniable site for a 'box.' There was a spring on the ground, and room for a nice carriage-drive down to the high road. The view was pleasing and extensive, the distance from the town a short mile; but 'slow-coach' had gone grubbing on, letting this land at four pounds an acre, because, as our 'man of the world' remarked, 'his grandfather had done the same.' The new comer, who last hailed from Yankeydom, of course soon proved too many for the 'bumpkin,' and became the possessor of the close in question at a good stiff figure. When the property had been duly conveyed, there was a considerable amount of crowing to be done in 'The George' bar on the part of our 'cute one, till one evening an old tradesman put the extinguisher on him by quietly remarking, 'You may build a house on the land, and a good 'un, too; but I'll be —— if you'll let it from now till doomsday.' 'Why not?' inquires the Yankee. 'Well, you see, it overlooks Captain S——'s place, and, if you'd been as long at Melton as I have, you'd know as no gentleman would take a house like that.' I think this roused misgivings in the speculator's mind, and made him suspect that not all the brains went over the Atlantic with the pilgrim fathers in the *Mayflower*, for we saw very little of him after that, and the field was subsequently knocked down by auction to its old owner at about half price, and he still 'grubs on' in the old way, excepting that he has built a little range of stabling, which he lets to an army man every year, and he says, in his quiet way, 'it all helps, you know.'

This imperturbable sagacity is characteristic of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and the above-mentioned speculator is by no means the only one whose calculations have been upset through not taking it into consideration. Political adventurers come down on philanthropic errands, trying to persuade us farmers that, though we don't know it, we really are in a most miserable condition of thraldom. They prove to demonstration that we are no more freemen in thought, word, nor deed, than were the serfs who wore the badge of Robert de Todenei; that his descendant, the present Duke of Rutland, and other landlords, are living in luxury and idleness on the sweat of our brows, and—we let them talk. Thus a stranger coming into 'The Bell,' for instance, on a market-day at election time, would think the Radicals were in a considerable majority even in this the old stronghold of Conservatism, but polling-day tells another tale, for the loud talkers very often don't happen to be voters, and the smokers mostly do.

But we must 'hark back' to our 'mutton,' or rather, to Melton as a hunting centre. The extent to which the town is dependent on its sporting guests may be gathered from the fact that, besides the four hotels, all of which are famous for their accommodation, there are over a score 'boxes,' old and new, which are almost always tenanted; and the studs owned by the occupants, varying in number between Mr. Behrens' (about forty) and the bachelor captains and majors who are content with less than a dozen, necessitate the employment of an army of grooms and stablemen, who contribute largely to the support of the tradesmen and innkeepers, and inhabit the medium-sized houses. The amount of forage consumed, too, is an important consideration to the farmers of the neighbourhood, while their wives find a ready and remunerative market for their poultry and dairy produce as long as 'the season' endures. The man who really hunts in this district, that is to say, who is not contented with attending the meet, and, at the utmost, joining in the first gallop, must, as a rule, have in his stalls about a dozen of the right sort; and even then an open season will often find him holding interviews with his stud-groom in January, which involve a deal of poll-scratching and straw-chewing on the part of that functionary, before he can take the field with much hope of seeing the end of 'a good thing.' There are exceptions to this as to every other rule. Mr. Burbidge, for instance, who rode out his title as 'father of the hunt' on less that half a dozen mounts; but we shall seldom see his like again. Charley Downs has been voted, I believe, to be the best horseman that ever rode the shires; but Charley has always had plenty of cattle at command, and it seems highly improbable that he could have done as much as the owner of the famous grey with the same resources. Mr. Burbidge was the beau ideal of a 'light' rider, and never rode more than nine stone. While speaking of this veteran, I may also mention that the nearest vulpine stronghold to Melton is the New Covert, which as often as not is called Burbidge's Covert, and with sufficient reason. He planted it, tended it, overcame the difficulties arising from the floods, and did all that in him lay not only to find the field, whenever they drew it, a *fox*, but a *run*. How many times have we heard the music strike up, viewed Charley away over the flat towards the ancient home of the Harboroughs, and seen the squadron stream in the wake of the 'Bright Belvoir Tan,' only to leave the old boy on his grey keeping guard lest the beggar should 'ring round' home again. Scores of good runs have been enjoyed through this self-denial on his part, and, when the fox did prove a straight one, Moody was generally able to join the field sooner or later through his knowledge of the country and the 'points' of the quarry. He has joined the majority now, but the cosy little gorse has fallen into good hands, and bids fair to find fur as of old, for his successor comes of a good Leicestershire stock, and is by general consent dubbed 'one of the right sort.'

A HIGHLAND SHINTY MATCH.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'

SHINTY, a game which very much resembles hockey, is rarely ever played south of the Tweed, or, for the matter of that, out of the shadow of a Highland mountain. It is one of the very oldest games, however, of the hardy Scottish mountaineers, and still, in some of the remote glens, clan meets clan as in the olden days when they fought with claymore and targe for the honour of their chief; or, what was more common, the cattle of their opponents. Highland sport like Highland warfare, is generally very rough, and although there is nothing of the 'win, tie, or wrangle about it,' it is conducted at blood heat. Indeed, a shinty match, with fifty stalwart clansmen on either side, stripped to the kilt, with bare heads, arms, and breast, rushing, and shouting, and jumping, when viewed from a hillside a short distance off, looks very much indeed like a pitched battle wherein firearms are not allowed to be used.

One of the most exciting of these matches ever played was that between the McNabs and the McIntyres in a quiet vale on the shores of Loch Lomond. The McNab of that ilk had long wooed the widow of a deceased chieftain, one who, like Roy's wife in the well-known song, dearly loved a Highland Walloch. But the McIntyre was also a champion who admired this dame, or rather this dame's land, which lay contiguous to his own,

"Whilst Donald played the stirring pibroch of the McNabs"

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and so made a marriage according to northern notions 'maist adveesable.'

The lady herself was rather in a difficulty, for if she gave her hand to the McNab she would raise eternal warfare between her clan, the Grahames, and the McIntyres, who were friendly; and possibly, as had happened many a time—indeed, this had been the cause of her widowhood—the rivals would likely fight with the broadsword till they had, Kilkenny-cat like, wounded themselves beyond recovery. In her dilemma she sought the advice of her piper, who believed in settling all disputes as to a lady's hand by a contest of some sort, just as did our more noble ancestors in the tilting ring.

'Weel,' said Duncan, 'what does your leddyship say as to their dancing for you, and I'll play the bagpipes? That wass the way I won my own wife. It was at Gillie Callum, and weel do I recollect our late chief saying, with a laugh, that I was like the good warriors of the ancient times, and won my wife nobly at the point of the sword.'

'Dancing! Oh, no, Duncan!' said the lady, smiling. 'I will never allow the dignity of the clan Grahame to be lowered by the people saying that I was danced for, like a brooch at the annual games.'

'Then let them throw the hammer for you, or toss the caber, if you like.'

'Neither will do,' said the fair widow, with a sigh. 'I might as well ask them to do the high jump or run the sack-race for me.'

'Deid, my leddy, I wish that Donald Campbell and me had competed for my wife at a sack-race. It's running yet we would have been, I'm thinking, for I did not want her; but I have such regard for my dancing that I would not make one false step to save my life. But the question is, How are you to be Mrs. McIntyre, or how are you to be Mrs. McNab? Now, if it is Mrs. McNab you would prefer to be, I would say, Hang your hand on the annual shinty match, which is to be played next Saturday.'

'Ah, Duncan, you have it now!' said the lady. 'But, oh, are you sure that the McNab and his men will gain the day?'

'You trust me to let McNab know, and I will risk my life that the McIntyre and his men will have no chance whateffer.'

'Then, as you value the comfort and prosperity of your late chieftain's widow, let the McNab know in such a manner as he may choose his men well, so that I may marry the man I love.'

'That will I do, Leddy Grahame' (Duncan always addressed her as 'My Leddy'), said the old man proudly. 'And you will stand on the green knoll of Doonielochan and see fair play, and I will blow my pipes to stir the shinty men as never man blew since Fingal's Cave was the music-hall of our sweet ancestors.'

On the following Saturday great was the stir on Loch Lomond side, for it had come to be known in every glen and strath in Stirlingshire, Dumbartonshire, and Argyleshire, that the annual shinty contest between the McNabs and the McIntyres was to be fought with a more than usual fierceness, and that the acres and fealty of 'the Grahames,' as she was termed, was at the disposal of the victorious side. The weather was fair, the atmosphere clear and frosty, and the peaks of Ben Lomond and the Buchanan hills—these lofty hills which guard Buchanan Castle, the seat of the Duke of Montrose—were clad with snow. Inchtavannach and Inchloaning, the lovely islands which are the admiration of hundreds of tourists who sail up the lake in summer time, seemed set in the shining lake like emeralds in a silver shield, and the old Cobbler above Loch Long seemed to set aside his last on the plea, like his brethren of St. Crispin, that his rosin was frosted and unworkable.

Down past Luss marched the McNabs, proudly, with their piper in front, blowing a stirring pibroch, their chief following with a huge shinty formed from the root and stem of an oak sapling, and ornamented on the handle with silver rings, each of which recorded a victory. Four deep to the number of forty the picked players of his clan followed, and then came the veterans of by-gone battles, and the aspiring youths anxious to see the fight and hopeful of being asked to participate in those of future days. The McIntyres, from the Stirling shore, marched round by way of Balloch, and the two bodies met on the banks of the Fruin, close to the home of the Colquhouns. Here the chieftainess of the Grahames, who had been rowed over Loch Lomond by eight of the strongest of her clan, had taken up her position on the little round knoll of Doonielochan, with Duncan her faithful piper, who strutted up and down in full blast and with ribbons blowing as proud as a turkey-cock. The McNabs were the first to prepare for the struggle, which they did by tossing aside bonnets and jackets and baring their brawny arms to the elbows. Not slow to follow were the McIntyres; and then, with shinties at the shoulder, they marched past the Queen of Beauty, the chieftains saluting the lady with all the dignity of veteran officers at a Royal review. Sides having been tossed for, the McNab elected to place his men with his back to the slight easterly breeze which had commenced to blow. The goals, two birch-trees, twenty feet apart, at the end of the glen, and two larch pines at the other, having been determined, the fair lady, who was herself to be the prize, flung the little 'knag,' a hard piece of wood cut from the boll of a beech-tree, on to the ground. The McIntyre struck it ere it fell, sending it far towards his winning goal-posts, the two larch pines, and in a moment the battle was raging with all the fury of a Highland foray. Swinging his powerful club, shaped like a golf club, only all natural wood as cut on the hillside, a McNab returned it with interest, amid applauding shouts in Gaelic and cries of 'Well done, Evan!' A scramble followed in the very centre, very much like a football scrimmage, and loudly rang shinty against shinty, whilst every now and then men sprang backward with exclamations of pain, their bare legs having received the blow which was intended to beat the weapon from the hand of an opponent. The McIntyres then began to press the McNabs heavily, and twice the 'knag' was within a few feet of the former's winning line, always to be forced back, however, by a well-aimed stroke from one of the wariest of clansmen.

From goal to goal the battle had raged, neither side having been able to score till the sun had reddened for setting in their wake. It was then that the McIntyre, with one grand rush, ran the 'knag' far down to the larch pines, followed by the members of his side, with blood streaming from the blows on their heads and faces, the results of dangerous sweeping strokes made at the object as it flew through the air, and with legs swollen and black with bruises, struck it through, amidst roars which rang from side to side of the loch. The McNab was crestfallen, and hung his head. The members of his clan were silent, and the Fair Lady of the Grahame, now, so far, the betrothed of the McIntyres, wept inwardly, though outside she dared not show her grief. Duncan was silent, pipes and all, though he would fain have played a coronach.

No time was lost, however, in changing sides, and in a moment the battle was raging again as fiercely as ever. The McNabs seemed determined to wrest back the fallen banner, but the McIntyres guarded their goal carefully, the chief himself taking up his position close to the larch pines, so as to check all attempts of his opponent to strike through the winning shot. Time after time were the invaders repulsed, and the veil of the fair Lady Grahame was wet with tears. One more rally, however, and McNab charged over his rival and struck with terrific force the bit of beechwood far through and beyond the trees.

The result, so far, was that both sides were equal, having scored one goal each, and Lady Grahame smiled again, for her hand was free, whilst Donald played the stirring pibroch of the McNabs. Dusk was now about to fall, and with but fifteen minutes or so more to play, the game was started afresh. Several men on either side had withdrawn disabled, but their places had been supplied by youthful onlookers, who had been burning to distinguish themselves. The McIntyres, whose chief was burning with rage at having the prize wrested from him in the very moment of victory, pressed hard, and charged with great fury, and the fair lady on the little green hill of Doonielochan was at times so nervous that she could scarce watch the competition. At last, almost at the close of time—that was when the very last of the setting sun had disappeared behind the hills above Loch Long—there was a determined rush of the McNabs to their opponents' goal. The sun, like a red shield, was sinking down quickly, and in one half minute more a draw would have been called, when McNab, nursing the 'knag' on the edge of his club single-handed till well down to the birch-trees, struck suddenly a terrific blow, causing it to rise and fly through the air as if discharged from a gun. McIntyre saw it coming, and aimed a blow at it as it passed; but it missed, and a Gaelic cheer from a thousand throats proclaimed that the hand of the fair Lady Grahame belonged to the proud chief of the McNabs.

Slowly, silently, and sullenly the M'Intyres marched down past the woods of Auchendennan, and home by Balloch, whilst the McNabs escorted the fair Lady Grahame to the pebbly strand of Loch Lomond. Seated in her galley, with her future husband beside her, and Duncan playing his pipes in the bow, a merrier or a happier party never crossed the Queen of Scottish Lakes. Shinty matches are still played, as of old, in Glen Fruin, but it is needless to state that none of them ever approach in excitement that in which the McNab played the McIntyre for the hand of the widow of the Grahame.

"Seated in her galley, with her future husband beside her"

A SPORTING PARVENU.

By 'LONGTAIL.'

'TOM,' said my father, 'tell them to put Deppar into the dog-cart, and you drive to meet the 4.20 from London to-morrow. I can take the new chestnut and be independent. Apologise to Mr. Meagrim for my not meeting him, and explain my absence on the score of its being market-day. I have particular reasons for being civil to him, and will try to be punctual at dinner time.'

This was Monday, and my father had a lot of work at Ipswich market on the Tuesday. I, of course, promised 'to obey,' but I was very near doing my business by halves; for that Tuesday was the 18th of January, on which day, it will be remembered, telegraph wires, station roofs, and other trifles, were rendered *hors de combat* by the snow. The roads were all but impassable when I turned the old mare's head to Branstone Grange, with our guest snugly tucked in by my side. The wind had dropped, however, and we could enjoy a weed; so, through much tribulation, we at length stamped into the hall, where a cheerful fire was burning.

I had time at last to join in the general welcome to Branstone, and mentally, in the criticism which our London friend could not expect to escape. Feeding-time had gone and come again, so we all sat down to a hot supper, and after that Dick and I entertained Mr. Meagrim in the smoking-room to the best of our abilities. The metropolitan news being exhausted, the talk was of shooting; and we found our friend was a great hand at snipe. When Dick volunteered the opinion that they were easily hit if they got up near you, and, if hit, were almost sure to fall, Meagrim dissented, as he had 'over and over again knocked one down several times without securing it.'

'At any rate, it's lucky your taste lies that way,' said I; 'for with this weather we shall have most of the birds. Our brook has springs in it, and they are bound to draw them. I was afraid we should be reduced to tracking the Frenchmen in Gunter's Lane Fields.'

A knock came at the door, and a servant said,—

'If you please, Mr. Tom, Carver wants a word with you.'

So I went into the kitchen, where I learnt that several wild duck had arrived.

'Better than ever, John! Horn of ale? Keep the place quiet, and be ready in the morning.'

'All right, Sir!'

'And, by-the-by, bring a broom-handle to feel where the ditches are. Good-night!' With this I rejoined the company, who were now discussing the comparative merits of choke and other bores, and the sizes of shot.

I said very little, for we three at Branstone used twelve-bore central, with number six, through the season, at all kinds of game, and generally killed our share.

We retired early, as usual, and next morning commenced operations before the birds could be disturbed. I took one side, and Dick and Meagrim the other. We had hardly got out of the 'croft' before a couple of duck went right across my line of fire. Bang! bang! from Meagrim, with no result; and bang! bang! from me, but only the second came down, and that was two fields away, on the side of the Earl Stonham road. Of course I had to go for it, as old Carlo could not be induced to cross the uninviting stream unless he saw what he was after. Despite two or three desperate flounders, I reached the spot where I had marked him down; and just as a butcher's cart came past I discovered my mallard lying prone on the bank by the roadside, with life enough left to scramble through the hedge. The butcher pulled up to watch proceedings, and I was rather nonplussed; because if he wobbled through the next fence he would be in one of our wide Suffolk ditches, now overhung with masses of snow. And this proved to be the case. Before I got him out I wished I had shot him through the head. Meantime the others had been awakening the echoes, and I at every reverberation was blessing my luck; but when I rejoined them I found only one longbill and a stray hen pheasant had been secured—these by Dick. It turned out that our London friend had found another lead-carrying snipe, which he said he had hit repeatedly, 'and brought it down, too.' 'He's under that bush on the side of the ditch now.'

I looked at Carver. 'Jack, Sir,' was his all-sufficient response; and truly the rogue rose at first call, only to fall a victim to my fire. My father said afterwards he ought to have been kept to breed from. The snow was soft, so there was no danger of frightening our game; and as we approached the Flats—a marshy tract near neighbour Scott's, with the brook meandering through it, and plenty of sedge, 'Expectation sat in the air,' but there was no keeping the Cockney's tongue quiet. A mallard rose and went straight away down stream; who killed I don't know, for Meagrim and I both fired, and the bird dropped in the brook, which here was open water, hard as the frost was. I complimented him on the shot, and I should think he had never compassed the destruction of one before; for he rushed on to one of those stunted alders that protrude over our brooks, and in his eagerness to draw it out with John's prodder, which he had snatched before starting, got a *duck*, but not the mallard. The latter I secured at the next stretch of ice.

When John had extricated him from his bath, and he had regained *terra firma*, we were joined by Charley Baldwin, who was briefly introduced, and advised our hero to make tracks to the Grange, refit, and join us at 'The Bend.' The splashing had been tremendous; but looking down stream I distinctly saw several duck lazily swim under the shelf of snow, and, signing to Baldwin to look out, I made a *détour* so as to come on to the spot at right angles, but keeping within shot in case they rose. Suddenly I went overhead in snow through not looking where I was going. On emerging I blessed the inventor of breechloaders. What a nice job it would have been screwing out the wads to clear the barrels! On reaching the spot no duck were to be seen; nor had any one observed them go away. The only conclusion I could come to was that they were Scott's tame ones, and had swum under the bank. Against the snow at a distance they all look black, and, except when he turns and the light falls full on him, you can't even tell a mallard from a duck. I don't think anybody felt easy about these web-toes; but January days are short, and I have only once or twice in my life known a scanty bag turned into a good one in the after-part of the day; so on we went.

The fun now grew 'fast and furious.' Snipe, duck, teal, and moorhen: the air seemed alive with them, and Meagrim, who joined us at 'The Bend,' was a benefactor to his cartridge-maker, but did nothing towards applying Malthus' theory to the wild-fowl—— Oh, I beg pardon! Malthus goes in for restricting ingress into the 'Vale of Tears.' However, I'll engage for Meagrim to allow all *feræ naturæ* to 'live out their little day.' As we had bagged a couple of hares the load was getting what John called 'a vast o' moil;' so we sent him to Scott's, and asked for a boy. We had never had such a day. The Ipswich and Stowmarket road was our boundary, but when we reached it Dick cried,—

'Look there, under the thorn-bush! What is it?'

'I don't know, but it's below water now.'

On looking further we saw a line of bead-like bubbles along the surface, which we had never observed on any other occasion, and these led straight to some sedge by the brookside, where there was a shallow. Then emerged Dick's monster in the shape of an otter, as we found afterwards, for none of us knew an otter from a Hottentot. It is stuffed now; and, having been presented to my sister by Charley, who bagged it, every attention is lavished on it, I can tell you.

Charley, you must know, is a Yorkshireman, and 'game for anything;' in fact, he is what we in our family circle call 'fellowy'—a term evolved from the fertile brain of the aforesaid sister, who is the biggest teaze out, and possessed of the delightful cognomen of 'Radiant.'

On the return beat, when we had commenced shooting the moorhens, a covey of French partridges rose from the ground we had traversed, and at my fire up rose the very ducks we had abandoned, five in number. They must have been lurking under the snow-shelf all the time. Charley and I were on good terms with them, and got two couple; Meagrim paying his usual contribution to somebody's coffers, and putting me in a state of trepidation lest he should blow my head off (I've only one). If you go out with these fellows always see the butt of their gun over your left shoulder, for dodge as you will they are bound to cover you. Also, 'ingenious youth!' don't neglect to give them the *pas* at a gap, or you will be likely to have it in two other senses: you will show them a lead out of this world, and precede them to the 'happy hunting-grounds.' It was now a question of the same kind as before, for Carlo wouldn't go; and so much the worse, because I had joined the others on their bank to avoid some nasty places on mine, so there were, as a well-known statesman would say, 'three courses open to us:' to send John by the bridge, to go ourselves, or exercise our ingenuity. After thinking a little I decided Scott's boy *might* get over the ice by rapid sliding, and then he could fling the game across. He found three, but the fourth was not; and both Charley and I began to say, 'Oh, my dear fellow, you must have missed with one barrel,' or words to that effect.

After getting half starved to death I went round, inwardly anathematising the stupidity of boys of the modern age; but when I thought I could pick up the duck almost blindfolded I found the middle ages were no more 'in it' than the modern. Find the bird I could not; and Charley kept chaffing me from the opposite bank, asking how long politeness called on a man of his distinguished talents to withhold his services from this great empire, by waiting for a duck which only existed in Tom Markland's imagination? whether that duck was not a descendant of Marcus Curtius? and other ridiculous and irrelevant questions, to which I gave no response. You might as well put out a fire by pouring petroleum on it as extinguish Charley Baldwin by 'anti-chaff.' However, the last-mentioned allusion suggested to my mind the possibility of the existence of surface drains, into one of which my bird might have fallen; and the second hole, no bigger than a rat-hole in appearance, turned out to have admitted the duck, which was stone-dead, the snow having closed over the orifice he made in falling into the runlet. I had the laugh now; but Charley, noways abashed, declared that a sportsman as well acquainted with the locality as I was ought to be able to drop his game where he could find it—'not keep a fellow shivering over the retrieving part of the business as long as a huntsman would take to dig pug out from an obstinate drain.'

Only one thing occurred during the return worthy of mention. I kept on the other side, and soon saw what I thought was a clod of earth or a piece of manure; but I noticed a track through the snow led from it to a burrow. To my astonishment it turned out to be a rabbit, and to my greater astonishment that rabbit waited too long. I bowled him over at about thirty yards—a variety for the bag.

Meagrim was to stay with us two days, but this eventually was extended to three; and, seeing he didn't prove equal to the occasion as the *pater's* partner at cards, though the latter 'stood on Ipswich Townhall steps and called for trumps,' and Charley revoked most audaciously when I partnered him against Meagrim and the Curate, we thought whist had better be 'voted slow,' and go in for harmony. The Curate was a good fellow, and a hero in the cricket-field. Charley and he were great friends, so that will give you a fair idea of his character.

'Who'll sing the first song?' says he.

'What sort?' inquired Charley.

'Shooting, for choice. As Mrs. Grundy won't let me have a crack in reality I may as well have one in imagination.'

'All right! Here goes, then!'

'There are men who find pleasure on Doncaster Moor,
Who at Epsom or Newmarket come to the fore,
But I don't care to stand while the races are run:
'Tis the jockey I wot that gets most of the fun.

CHORUS.

Then hurrah for the tints of the sere autumn lanes,
When the merry brown birds whirr over the plains,
A winter that's warranted all to the snow,
And the logs that at eventide merrily glow,
For the circle of friends that are worthy the name!
Hurrah for the gunner! hurrah for the game!

Blithely we roam the wild coveys to track,
Of stories at lunch-time we never have lack,
And pensively muse as the grey gloaming falls
Of the men that once throng'd to old Oakley's halls.
Then hurrah, &c.

Oh, I love the cries that oft greet the ear,
When the wild-fowl start from the sedgy mere,
And the eerie sounds they give out at night,
As they wheel in the pale moon's doubtful light!
Then hurrah, &c.'

There was no lack of songs from all quarters, excepting mine. I've had two trials, and the verdict is that I am the worst singer but one in England. The other is now in Yorkshire, and they give him the palm; because they say I *do* hit a note *by chance*, but he *never* does.

'Early birds, you fellows, are likely to catch more than worms to-morrow.'

'Hope old Duncombe won't catch me,' said Charley, as we neared that gentleman's property next morning.

The said reverend gentleman had a plantation close to our beat, and it was Charley's delight to walk this on the day we shot that part; so when we neared the stile that led into it he went for it as naturally as a duck goes to water. He was astride of the stile, when a cock which had been running up the ditch rose as it entered the thicket. Charley brought him down well, and coolly replaced the empty cartridge by a fresh one without relinquishing his equestrian attitude.

'Do you remember, Dick,' says he, 'two years ago, when I got into that row with Duncombe? I stood only a yard or two further in, and dropped a cock as near as can be where that one lies now.'

'I should think I did recollect it,' says Dick, 'and the beautiful temper the Governor was in for a week or so.'

'Well, old Duncombe—stingy old "dog in the manger"—jumped up from behind that very bush on the right and threatened legal proceedings.'

Charley had just finished, when up rose old Duncombe from the same lurking-place.

'Aye, and here I am again!' he screeched; 'and it's a great pity such a coincidence shouldn't be carried out thoroughly. I'll see that it wants for no completion this time!'

When not taking a very active part in what goes on I have time to make notes, and when I remember them I jot them down lest a second Book of Proverbs should be lost to future ages. Now, this time I had not only kept Carlo to 'down charge,' but noticed that the ditch was inside the plantation; so, as Charley had not crossed the stile, I pulled him back before he could do so, and by leaving old D. the *spolia opima*, and dragging Charley away—he growling like a bear the while—a law case was avoided.

Next came our own woods, and one precaution we always observed—viz., to put a couple of 'dead nailers' at that end nearest Duncombe's; and old John, taking me apart, said,—

'Mr. Tom, that 'ere gen'leman fro' Lunnon don't fare to be much good together. Hadn't we better put Mr. Dick and Mr. Baldwin at the bottom?'

'Just as you like, John; only don't talk about it. My father likes his guests to have the warm corners.'

They beat the wood very slowly, to keep the birds from coming out too fast; and, as they were wild pheasants, Charley and Dick rendered a good account of their lot. I killed five, and, *mirabile dictu!* Meagrim undoubtedly 'broke his duck's egg,' by bringing one down the moment it had 'topped the slop' (a Suffolk term for woods that are periodically cut down for hurdles, &c.). We had a good bag out of this; and when we emerged Charley was gazing intently at the retreating figure of Mr. Duncombe, with the pheasant in his hand, and that 'straight ahead' look and gait, which betokened an inward determination to be even with Master Charley yet.'

'Now my classics come in usefully,' says the latter; 'first time as far as I recollect, Tom. You remember me translating *reverte stylum* "turnstile?" Well, now I know what it does mean—return to that stile.'

All I could do to persuade him was useless. He shot the wood; and not only got three birds, but picked up some of our wounded ones, driving many more back to the Branstone covert. He seemed much comforted by this achievement, and John remarked, 'It seemed to do Mr. Charley a vast o' good.'

To reach the next covert we had to thread a gap, and Meagrim asked John to go through and take his gun from him.

'Neow, neow, Sir! do *you* go first, and I'll bring the gun.'

Charley's eyes twinkled, but John in an undertone admonished him not to 'laaf.' We had hardly got through the gap, when, from a wide ditch strewn with snow-sprinkled leaves, 'Clap! clap!' denoted the rise of the king of long bills—lawyers always excepted. We all had a go; but as usual, when a woodcock gets up unexpectedly, the cry of 'Cock! Mark cock!' is sure to flurry the junior members, unless the birds are met with frequently. We all missed except Meagrim, who 'hit him hard,' and for a moment he was screened by a hoary thorn. 'Bang!' on my right, and one of the longest shots I ever saw was scored to Dick; but Charley declared it was 'impossible to bring a bird down at that distance.'

'Meagrim must be the man who perpetrated the fatal deed. Splendid shot, Meagrim, old man! Come and have a turn with me on my Suffolk beat down Lowestoft way. About two thousand acres. As fine a stretch of ground as you ever saw in some respects. View in one direction very extensive, I assure you.'

'Thanks! Shall be delighted, I'm sure; for, between you and me, if there is one thing I can do it is "pulling them down."'

'You shall kill every bird on the place if you can. It's a pleasure seldom enjoyed and hard to describe, seeing the workmanlike manner in which you make the feathers fly.'

In course of time Meagrim went down to Lowestoft, when Charley introduced him to the *shore.*

When we had beaten the next wood and gathered a wounded bird or two—(can't a 'winged cock' lead a dog a dance!)—the light was fading, and Charley observed, *sotto voce*,—

'We might as well give it up, as our Bogardus *might* hit something if it got much darker, and then we should be such a time finding it, you know.'

When Dick had given an account of the proceedings to my father the latter congratulated M. on having *seen* such good sport, and expressed himself as highly delighted that 'the boys' had been able to show it. The emphasis on the word 'seen' was far too slight to attract Meagrim's notice, and his last evening at Branstone Grange was passed in a mental seventh heaven of satisfaction at the number he persuaded himself he had bagged.

'Radiant' was so pleased to see everybody else pleased that without much pressing, she gave us the following song among several others :—

'Oh, cheery it is at the children's hour,
When the North wind raves round the ancient tower,
When those mystic forms in the pine-logs glow,
To sit by the fire, while maid, matron, and sire,
By turns make the streams of quaint harmony flow !

Chorus.
In dreamland sweet true time doth fleet,
But 'tis bootless half way fell sorrow to meet.

There's no soul worth the name, from the Squire and his dame
To the peasant, but feels with the Christmastide flame
A heart sympathetic—a feeling more kind ;
They con over their store to comfort the poor,
And to faults of past days they grow wondrous blind !

In dreamland sweet true time doth fleet,
But 'tis bootless half way fell sorrow to meet.

As our guest had to catch the early train to town he was called betimes. We, being country-bred, didn't want calling ; and after a genial adieu I drove him to the station, got the comics for him, and gave him my parting benediction.

SPORT IN AMERICA.

A Disappointing Bear Hunt.

By J. Harrington Keene.

SAY, boys! Hi Kemp has just brought down a big black bear from the mountain. He sighted another right over Bourne Pond. Come and see!'

The speaker was a tall, raw-boned Vermonter, standing over six feet, named John Hanley, who owned a small farm away up on the mountain-side, and we were four of the inhabitants of the little village of M——, assembled, as is the time-honoured custom each Saturday night, in the 'prohibition' state of Vermont, in the drug-store instead of the liquor-shop, to discuss the news. It was a fine July evening, and at the words I have narrated there was a stampede to the door. Outside stood Hi Kemp, a long, lathy, wiry-looking fellow, clad in homespun, and by his side, lying on the pavement, was a huge black bear, which he had just drawn from his waggon, and had exposed for inspection.

Perhaps, before going further, I had better explain the exact geographical position of the scene of this short but veracious history. Briefly, then, the state is that of Vermont, as before indicated, so named from its green mountain range running almost directly north and south throughout its length. The county is that of Bennington, famed in the annals of the American War as the locale of a signally bloody battle, in which the hardy settlers acquitted themselves like men should defending their own; and the little village of M—— contains but about two hundred people, and is situated between the huge Mount Equinox of the Teconic range on the west, and the undulating green mountains on the east, rising green-plumed, tier above tier like the luxuriant foliaged hanging-gardens of Babylon. Time was, and not so long ago, when the deer were plentiful in the green mountain forests, and when one had not to pass away to the Adirondack wilderness for all other kinds of game. Save, however, a few rabbits, squirrels, foxes, and an occasional black bear, this magnificent range has now been denuded of its *feræ naturæ*. Hence the mild excitement of the announcement which begins this story.

I will spare the English reader the interrogative process by which the details of the capture of this fine specimen was extracted from Hi Kemp. It is sufficient to say that he had tracked it while out bee-hunting. He was a bee-hunter by choice, and a good metal-worker by profession, though too lazy to work, and by a lucky shot, for Hi was by no means a marksman, had killed it. It was a male and very fat, and this fat is worth several dollars a pound, so Hi was proportionately joyful. Besides this, he had seen its mate, and now proposed that some of the 'boys' (this is an affectionate New England term, an abbreviation of 'the green mountain boys,' as the Vermonters were known during the war of the rebellion) should go on next day, and have a regular up-and-down bear-hunt. Times were slack, the haying had not commenced, the crops were growing, the weather fine and not too hot—what more pleasant than a jaunt in the woods?

Besides,' said I, 'didn't somebody tell me'—for I was a new-comer to this delightful valley—'that there are big trout in Bourne Pond?'

'You bet yer sweet life there is,' responded John Hanley; 'and it's meself'—(John was of Hibernian extraction)—'it's meself that intends to do a bit of fishing as well, if I can find my pole, and no "conneptions" about it. Guess we'll go te-morrer. Say, boys, is it a go?'

All were agreed; that is, six in all, and never a brighter morning arose on this sweet western valley than the morrow brought. Our Winchester repeating rifles were brought out, and the fishing-tackle basket overhauled, not forgetting the split-cane fly-rod and the lancewood 'bait-pole,' for live baiting or spinning. Then the provision basket had to be supplied, at which old Harry Fielder (who had insisted on being one of the party, though over threescore years of age) said, naively, 'Don't yer ferget a leetle er ther Wink Eye in the stone-jug, in case some hev yer gits scratched by the bar. I've knew'd bars to scratch powerful mean, and nuthin' but a good swaller er "Wink Eye" would du yer enny good. Besides, yer see, boys, ther fish wunt bite wuth a snake's fut without a leetle drop er "Wink Eye" properly "peripherated" with ekal quantities er "acquer purum." No, Sir—ee,—' and the old man closed his eyes with a solemn double wink, like an old owl in sunlight.

Lest any reader may be in doubt as to the identity of the aforesaid medicament, I will just here explain that it has another cognomination of more familiar sound in states where the Maine Liquor Laws do not obtain, viz. 'Old Rye.' A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, however, and despite the sublime and beautiful fiction that the prohibition enactments of Maine and Vermont have here improved liquor off the surface of the earth (it really has done nothing of the kind), we still continue to poison ourselves with good whisky, and on hunting and fishing expeditions rather seem to enjoy the suicidal process.

It was but little beyond sunrise in point of time when we started for our destination. The track lay up the sides of the highest peak of the verdant range, and though the summit over which we had to pass rose some four thousand feet above the sea level, and our path was through canyon and forest of unexampled naturalness, the waggon road, as is often the case with limestone formations, was comparatively good and accessible to our light and well-trained horses and slenderly-built but toughly-strong waggon. Of course, our party walked for the most part, taking a stray shot here and there at a gay squirrel with the pea-rifle, and making the dewy woodlands and crags re-echo with our laughter and shouts. Like a select party of Eton boys—minus the aristocratic dress, probably—rather than bloody-minded bear-slayers, were we in our unconventional frolics and light-heartedness, whilst old Harry Fielder kept the laugh incessantly going with his quaint, grim New England humour, springing spontaneously and ever fresh from the old warrior. The gait of the more experienced of the party was strikingly similar to that of a Highlander, springy and long in stride, with bent knees and almost rhythmical regularity and unison. Ere the first three miles up the sloping woods had been compassed, I found that this style of progression was the best, and gradually the exuberance of all settled down to the steady, continued march. At the termination of the fourth mile the summit was gained, and we stood on a huge tableland stretching far in front of us, and to the west the fertile valley of the Ondawa stretched out resplendant in its green robes of summer— a panorama of dædal beauty unsurpassed by anything in the Old World, if, indeed, equalled, even to the partial eye of an Englishman.

Here we halted and rested, preparatory to starting for the remaining five miles of our journey, and need I hint in the gentlest manner that we refreshed ourselves with a slight repast, in which the stone jug did important service. Then on again, and this time riding, so that our pace was greatly accelerated. After a time we again plunge into thick woodland ways, not to emerge till on a sudden the broad expanse of a large lake dancing and rippling in the sunshine opened upon our view, clothed round with the thick foliage of birch and spruce, elm, oak, and sugar-maple, wherein the robin, thrush, yellow hammer, and oriole held high carnival, unfearing and unmolested by the destroying hand of man. A rough log-hut marked the usual camp of visitors, which, from this sparsely-populated part of the state, were very few, and near it in the water, drawn half-way up the bank, lay a raft of thick spruce timbers, rudely constructed for fishing purposes on the lake.

The horses were next 'unhitched,' and we sat down to a good square meal before doing anything further, for our journey had roused the demon hunger with a fury unknown to the pale, dyspeptic dwellers in cities. This done the plan of operations was next decided. Being a stranger and feeling mad—for bear-hunting to me is far inferior sport to a good morning's work with the bass or trout—it was judged better for me and one of the party to keep to the neighbourhood of the lake. Hi Kemp had first seen the bear he killed and its mate within a hundred yards of the log-hut, and as the rest of the party intended scouting the forest all round within the radius of a mile or two, there was, if anything, a better chance near the water than in the forest itself. Besides, from the raft we could command all the lake shore without difficulty and noiselessly, not to mention being fairly out of sight if we hugged the bank. The rest of the 'boys' would reassemble at the camp at sundown. That was the final arrangement, against which I had nothing to urge.

My companion was a young man of litttle experience in woodcraft, but a good fisherman, the son of the village chemist, just home from Boston for a vacation owing to delicate health. He had begged to be one of the party, but frankly confessed to me that he had never been to the lake before. However, that did not matter much, and ere long we were afloat, and soon amongst a good school of bass, clean forgetting all about old Harry Fielder's injunction, 'Now, boys, keep yer eye peeled for the bar; she's very like to wander down to hev a squint at yer, speshially as we shall give her a tarnation roustin' round if we don't manage to pot her out in the woods yender.'

Reader, have you ever taken a 2 lbs. black bass on rod and line, and fine tackle at that? No! Well, you have a new sensation to live for. It is something altogether different to the mighty rush and earnest antagonism of a salmon, and it has none of the pulse-stirring, nerve-exciting, agile struggling of the trout. It is a combination of both salmon and trout sport, with quips and oddities of its own which make it unspeakably fascinating. The small-mouthed black bass is game to the death and out into the dream beyond. He springs from the water with greater persistency and quicker movement than the 'lordly' *Salar*, and he never knows when to yield up his sword to the victor like the spotted *fario* or *fontinalis*. There is a boldness and wickedness about his bite that seems to rouse one's blood, and do away with that faint feeling of compunction which often arises over the capture of some thyme-scented grayling. In a word, bass fishing is a sport distinctive and peculiar, and hence most exhilarating.

And so we found it, and taking a bite ourselves now and again, and a sip as we required it from our flasks, we found the day wearing on; and, as our large creels became more and more plethoric, we became, if possible, even more oblivious of the bear-hunting part of the expedition. At last the sun dipped beyond the high peak of the Equinox mountain, and suddenly the stream of sunlight was shut off. This reminded us, with a start, that the evening was approaching. We had drifted to the opposite side of the lake, quite a mile from the log-hut, and if we purposed looking for Bruin round the shores as we returned, it was time we were moving.

'We must make tracks, by thunder!' said Rob, my companion. 'Here, you take the Winchester, K——, and I'll pole you. Keep your eye on the shore, and if it's only a rabbit you see, let fly at him ; it will make the boys think you have shot at the bear.'

'Right you are,' I replied, determined to have some shooting of some sort, and off we went, slowly rounding each curve and peering into each thicket for some sort of game, if only a squirrel, to blaze away at.

The twilight was rapidly dying into a purple haze infinitely beautiful, but which renders outlines very indistinct, as we emerge from one of the lily-covered coves we had been exploring. At the point we were approaching stood a thicket of birch and fir, and simultaneously with my companion I uttered a suppressed exclamation. There, right before us, half-hidden by the trunk of a tree, stood, or rather leaned, the dark form of some animal evidently watching our movements with curiosity. It was not more than a hundred and fifty yards away.

'Great Scot, Rob, that's the bear,' I whispered ; 'bring me a little nearer, so that I can cover his breast. D—— it, he's dodging round the tree like a squirrel,' I added, as the creature cleverly placed the tree between itself and the raft, showing only a leg and a black paw round the trunk.

One push of the pole brought the raft half-a-dozen yards nearer, but before it steadied, so that I could take aim, the bear had dodged to another tree. This it kept doing with annoying frequency. Just as soon as I got the rifle to sight on it, its vulnerable part at which I might be aiming disappeared. We decided to remain perfectly quiet and stationary till a favourable moment arrived, but the gathering darkness warned me very soon that something must be done if I was to get a shot. Still the same tactics of the bear went on.

I grew desperate. 'Push into the bank, Rob,' I said ; 'I'll stalk that infernal brute if it takes all night.' Rob pushed ashore with one dig of the pole, and out I jumped.

"Don't shoot" came from the bear

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I ran twenty yards nearer to where the beast awaited my coming, evidently with perfect nonchalance. This time he was in full view. Up went the rifle, and I quickly drew a bead on his heart, my finger felt for the trigger, I involuntarily held my breath——

'Don't shoot!' came from the bear in sharp, stentorian tones, Down went my rifle like a flash.

'B'gosh! young feller, you very nigh killed your bar and no conniptions about that there!' came from the bear again, followed by a hearty peal of laughter from Rob, while other shouts of laughter arose from the neighbouring trees, and then again from the rest of the party as they stepped from their hiding-places, followed by peal on peal till the woods echoed and re-echoed. Presently old Harry—the bear—walked up, and pulling off the bear-skin rug he had over his shoulders handed his flask to the writer with touching solemnity. The writer drank not loud but deep.

These Vermont 'boys' are past all reform in the matter of practical joking. It was no use being 'mad.' But after the laugh had subsided in the drug-store on the narration of the incident by old Harry Fielder, it turned out that Hi Kemp had never seen another bear, so, I, at least, had the sport of a good 'string' of bass, and an 'unconventional bear-hunt' in the bargain.

A TRAINER'S DIFFICULTIES.

By 'AN OLD TURFITE.'

'YES,' said the old trainer, as he led the way to what he called his *sanctium sanctorum*, 'there's as much to do now about an establishment like mine in looking after the lads as the hosses—ay, and a good deal more,' he said, turning round as he reached the door. 'If you have got a bad hoss about the place he's a *bad hoss*, that is all; but a bad boy nowadays can play the very mischief with the whole stable!'

'But how do you succeed in always obtaining good ones?' was the question I asked, as he handed me a chair in his snug little back parlour. 'You seem to have a nice lot of boys about you, and smart ones as well.'

'Well, we don't altogether breed 'em, as old Lord Yarborough, they say, used to do his tenants; but we *weed* 'em very carefully. If they're off nice quiet sort of folks we haven't much difficulty with 'em, but if their fathers have been a little wild, and going much about public-houses, and backing hosses betimes, and talking about it, then they're risky. They may be smart lads in the stable, and all that; but you want more than that nowadays.'

'Secrecy!' we said, as he stopped to light his pipe, having previously handed us a cigar-box containing some very choice Havanas.

'That's it—*secrecy!*' he said, continuing. 'If you have one or two lads about the place who have got bad companions, then all the world will know everything long before the owner; and that, I can tell you, means a nice nest o' wasps for the trainer. But how do you like that cigar?'

'Could not wish for a better,' was my reply, as he opened a little cabinet on the mantelpiece and took out a letter. Handing it to us, we saw that it was from an extensive tobacconist and billiard-room proprietor 'To W. Ashford, with compliments;' and concluding with the hope that if there was anything in the stable that was good for anything to let him know.

'So, for one box of cigars,' I said, 'your little lad Billy Ashford was to sell the secrets of your whole stable to the frequenters of a large billiard saloon, the chief *habitués* of which were most likely bookmakers.'

'Yes; but it wasn't Billy's fault. He can't stop these fellows sending him these things; so I just take all that comes by the post in here myself, and constitute myself Postmaster-General for the whole lot. Not a bad job either, I can tell you, since the Parcel Post was started, though why the deuce they think jockeys have all a weakness for meerschaum pipes I cannot very well make out. If I have one here I have twenty, and all, of course, from men wanting to know "a good thing;" but there is something that cost a great deal more than anything that ever came by post,' he said, producing from the mantelpiece a plain little steel horse-nail. 'You could buy them at a shilling a hundred,' he said, 'or something like that; but that one cost us twenty thousand pounds!'

'That's if you calculate it on the old horseshoe counting system of doubling for the first, and double that for the second, and so on."

'Oh, no! there as it is; but if you'll just let me get my pipe well going I will let you have my stories in my own way.'

'You see,' he said, 'when I started, about thirty years ago, I was green a little as regards touts, having been in an out-of-the-way stable where they didn't hang much about. Nor did they bother me much here till after I had got a few good horses. Not that a sight of them is altogether unwelcome, for, take my word for it, if the touts are to be seen about, you have something that can go. Sharks follow a ship, they say, when there's a dead man on board; and touts will somehow hang round a training stable where there is a real live horse—one that can go. Well, I kept a good eye on my lads, and all that; but, let me do what I could, folks got to know everything about my place—a good deal more than I knew myself. At length things came to a head through my being done in the most barefaced manner you can imagine. Shall I tell it you?'

'By all means!' was my reply, as I helped myself to some excellent Hollands from the little square bottle in the decanter spirit-stand—a neat present from some old racing patron; 'one can never have enough of good yarns about racing.'

'Well, then, I had got to have a name amongst the touts, about being the wariest man alive, a regular Yorkshireman with the "bite," and all that, and as uncommunicative as a dumb jockey. The barber up there who shaved me gave me up as a bad job, and said he didn't believe I had a tongue, till one day he cut my cheek, and then he found out his mistake. He never said more than "Good morning!" to me after that for a long time. However, some of them were determined to have me; and they did get to know I had a rattling good one for the Great Tykeshire—and I knew it pretty well myself. Well, it got nicely in for weight, and the owner had made up his mind to plank down the money—and so had I, for I did want a bit oft something. Just the very morning, however, we find out how good he was, what does a weed of a two-year-old do but lash out with both heels, and landed me right in the pit of my stomach. I was doubled up completely; and they carried me in, put me in bed, and sent for the doctor, who said I was in a bad way—hurt internally, and all that; and, indeed, in a very dangerous condition. Well, I got a little bit afraid of that, for though I had been a little bit straighter than most folks, some little things I had forgotten began to come trotting right up in my mind and making me uncomfortable. This had gone on for a day or two, and I wasn't getting much better, when my wife says the Vicar has sent over the new curate to ask for you, maybe you'd like to see him. "Show him up," says I; "I'm not going off on the long journey yet, but he may take a bit of the weight off, and that'll be something in my favour over the distance!" says I. Well, in he comes. You never saw such a Methodist-looking chap in your life. Black coat, black clothes, black hat, black everything but a great, big, broad white tie under his chin, and a face as long as a bass fiddle. Well, the wife gave him a chair, and he sat down there, and he gave me about the severest rubbing down I had experienced since I left school. You never heard any one like him for pitching into racing, which rather astonished me, for the Vicar himself was a bit of a sportsman, and rather liked a race now and then. However, there he was by my bedside, and my wife crying awful, for you would have thought I was fairly weighed out. "Well," says he, "you must promise, if you do recover, to give up this iniquitous calling, and live a peaceful and an honest life!" This was rather rough on a fellow with the best three-year-old ever he had in his life under him; so I said, "Well, I would after Saltfish" (that was the name of the horse) "won the Great Tykeshire." "Ah!" he said, "my poor friend! has the world still such a hard grasp upon thee? Consider, if he should not win, what would be thy fate in the next world." "Should not win!" says I, getting a little bit excited—"why, he *can't lose!* Saltfish can give Foxglove fifteen pounds and a couple of lengths, and there isn't a horse in England can do that!" "Ah!" he says, "you do not know how delighted," he says, "you have made me; if I could but see the noble animal that is destined to save thee from future perdition, that I might bless it, I would be satisfied." "And you shall see it," says I; and the missus got hold of the head lad, and showed him all over the stable.

'Well, from that day forth I got better; but what played Harry with me was that up in London the folks knew everything, not only about Saltfish, but every horse in my stable. The owner was curious, and so was I. I dismissed half my lads, shot the watch-dog, hanged the cat, and, if it hadn't been that my wife threatened to put me in a lunatic asylum as having gone completely off my head over my illness, I would have locked her up. This went on for about a fortnight, when one day, as the Vicar was passing, I says, "Well, how's your new curate?" "What d'ye mean?" says he. "Why, the chap that called on me!" says I; "the man that don't like racing!" "I cannot for the life of me understand you," says he. "When Mr. Jackson left I resolved never to replace him, and I haven't." "Good morning, Vicar!" says I, the sweat breaking all over me. That afternoon I walked up to the town for the first time since I had been ill, and on the road I could see the sharps all sniggering. Now, who do you think my new parson was? Who but Jack Grimsby, the biggest blackguard and tout on the Turf! That's why I never go to church now—the sight of a parson makes me ill.'

'So much for the parson; but what about the horse-nail that cost twenty thousand pounds?'

'Ah! well, I had almost forgot about that; however, I shan't keep you long over that. It was this way. We had got a rare good one in the Rowley Cup once—a three to one on chance, and no mistake—and I never let him out of my sight for a moment. He was backed from the very moment the weights appeared, for the gentleman who had him did not believe in letting real good things be wasted. I stood to win a big stake myself, so did the jockey—so did every one connected with him. Never had I a horse more ripe, more fit in every way, than that horse was the morning of the race. I followed him about the paddock like a dog, and I had made up my mind my money was in my pocket, as had every one who had got a single sixpence on him. I saw him saddled, mounted, led him out, and let go his head with the remark to the jockey, "Well, Sam, you know what to do; it's no use my giving you instructions." "Not a bit," says he; "I could win let me ride him the worst way I could. "As good as money," say you; but no, I never consider a race won till the jockey's past the scales, and you may lose one after that. But what does the horse do but somehow twist a plate just when I let go his head. In a minute or two he was back in the paddock, and the thing was just being put right, when some idiot shouted out, "Hurry up!" The blacksmith, a decent fellow, got flurried, and drove this very nail you see aslant into the quick o' the hoof, and twenty thousand pounds of good money went into the ring with one crack of a hammer. We started him, but he was so sorely pricked that he finished last on three legs. So you see, after all, there's something in luck in racing. But, Sir, I might keep you till morning telling some of a Trainer's Difficulties.'

A DAY WITH THE FERRETS.

By 'FUSBOS.'

'WELL, old man,' observed with a sigh my host, Fred Lumley, as we sat together in his smoking-room one evening towards the close of January—we had been shooting all day, and, having divested ourselves of our dirty boots and gaiters, were now indulging in a quiet cigar, previous to joining the ladies at five o'clock tea—'Well, old man, the fun's nearly all over—eh?'

'Yes,' was my reply, in equally sad tones. 'As you say, it's all over but shouting, worse luck! and the only thing for us to do now, that I can see, is to put our guns and shooting-boots away, smoke our pipes philosophically, and wait patiently for the twelfth of August, or—in case neither of us has any kind friend to ask us to his moor—the first of September to come round again.'

'Oh, but it's not quite so bad as that, though,' returned Fred. 'I'm not the man to put my guns away until the very last moment, depend upon it. No, no! We'll go out to-morrow to wind up the season (it's the last day, you know), and pick up what we can; and in order to keep up the fun, I've got Stratton and his ferrets coming over.'

'And who might Stratton be?' I inquired.

'What!' exclaimed Fred, 'haven't I ever trotted out Stratton for your benefit? Well, Stratton, if you must know, is *the* rat-catcher *par excellence* in these parts. He was originally a keeper—in fact, was once in that very capacity here, in my father's time—and a most excellent keeper he was, and a rare hand at bringing up tame pheasants. Unfortunately, he couldn't keep away from drink—in fact, was never sober; consequently, he gradually descended in the social scale, until at last he found his level as rat-catcher and mole-killer-in-ordinary to the country-side. With all his faults,' went on Fred, 'I'm fond of old Stratton; and whenever I want to kill my rabbits down fine I always send for him—more especially when I ferret and shoot them myself, by way of amusement: for, somehow or another, my own men never seem to succeed in making them bolt like that old reprobate Stratton does. Besides which, he amuses me with his talk and his ways generally. Oh, dear, no!' wound up Fred; 'I couldn't think of letting you go without introducing you to Stratton, his boy Bill, and his select pack of curs!'

* * * * * *

'Is Stratton come, do you know?' inquired Fred of the butler the next morning, as we sat at breakfast.

'Not five minutes ago, sir, and he's waiting in the stable-yard,' was the reply.

'Good! Is he sober?'

'Well, yes, sir; I *think* he's all right this morning, sir!' smirked the butler.

'Oh, then, Magnum, just ask him into the servants'-hall and give him a horn of beer, will you—only *one*, mind—and say we shall be ready for him soon.'

'The old rascal!' observed Fred, as the butler left the room. 'I dare say you think me a screw, old fellow, at drawing the line at one glass of beer; but the fact is, the last time Stratton paid me a visit he arrived so drunk that he had to be locked up in a loose box for a few hours in order to get sober, and he nearly set the place on fire lighting his pipe before we let him out.'

'Dreadful creature!' murmured Mrs. Lumley at this point. 'I can't imagine, Fred, what you can see in the wretch to have him about the place at all.'

'Such a character, my dear!' mumbled Fred, with his mouth full of deviled kidney.

'Such a *bad* character, you mean!' laughed his wife, with a sly glance at me, handing me another cup of tea as she spoke. 'Besides,' she added, 'I have never forgiven those dreadful dogs of his for killing my poor garden cat. Too bad, was it not, Mr. Fusbos?'

'Well, my dear,' observed Fred, who, having finished his breakfast, now rose from the table, 'it *was* too bad; but all I can say is, that if you had only witnessed the licking Stratton administered with his spud to his unfortunate bowwows, I think you would have forgiven the murderers of your cat on the spot. And now,' said he, addressing me, 'come along, and be introduced to the old sinner; for if we leave him too long by himself the chances are he'll get round the butler, and drink more beer than is good for him.'

There are worse amusements in this world, in my humble opinion, than that afforded by the professional rat-catcher with his ferrets and his motley pack of dogs. Indeed, I once heard of rat-catching being actually classed as sport in front of fox-hunting by a youthful nobleman, now a great man in the political world. Out hunting one day with the old Larkshire, in the vicinity of his father the Duke's ancestral castle, he rode over a hound in the ardour of the chase. This was quite enough for the M. F. H., Tom Butcher, a rough diamond of the finest water, and much given to language more Pagan than Parliamentary.

Having given his Lordship a 'bit of his mind' in a style that would have done credit to any bargee, he wound up by ordering the 'princely young vagabond,' as he called him, to return at once to his ancestral castle, or 'he'd take the hounds home—dashed if he wouldn't!'

The pair not long after met at the annual hunt dinner, when the young Lord returned the compliment with interest. To the great delectation of the audience and the proportionate disgust of the M. F. H., his Lordship, in the course of a neat speech, delivered himself of the following piece of sarcasm, glancing slyly as he spoke at Tom Butcher:—

'I'm fond of all kinds of sport,' said he, 'from rat-catching in a barn to *hunting with the old Larkshire*.'

My Lord *scored* heavily, I fancy, with that slashing hit to leg.

In the servants'-hall, gazing sadly at the empty beer-jug beside him, we found the renowned Stratton awaiting us, who sprang up at 'attention' on our entrance. A tall, wiry man, with hair just turning to grey, with a sharp, brisk manner about him, and betraying no signs as yet in his personal appearance (which was decidedly prepossessing, by the way) of that one little failing Fred Lumley had previously mentioned to me.

Having, like the born courtier he was, made some tender inquiries after Mrs. Lumley and the pretty little dears, as he called the children of the house, he next suggested that it was 'wery hot in the sun,' giving his brow a mop over with a dirty red handkerchief as he spoke, thus paving the way in a delicate manner, as he fondly hoped, for another glass of beer: which hope, however, was nipped in the bud by Fred replying, with a wink at me, that in his opinion it was devilish cold—as, indeed, it was, being a hard frost at the time.

'Then,' said the defeated one, 'we'd better be a-movin',

"Ah! "Juniter" dont tell no lies; he dont!"

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genelmen, for there's no time like the mornin' for boltin' o' rabbits.'

Accordingly, we got our guns, and accompanied by an under-keeper, the renowned Stratton, his boy Bill, and his dogs, we made a start. What dogs they were, to be sure, those of Stratton's!—curs every one of them, of course, but each looking more cunning than his fellow. Two of them, who, trotted along complacently in front of the rest of the pack, seemed to officer the gang, as it were, and were evidently prime favourites with their master. They were both long-bodied, short-legged doggies, and very much alike, with the exception that one was black and the other of a dirty grey colour. One rejoiced in the name of Jumiter—which was Stratton for Jupiter—and the other was called Rodney, and they were, I was informed by Fred, the two principal offenders in the murder of Mrs. Lumley's unfortunate cat, and I could quite believe it.

'Good dogs, I suppose, those two—are they not?' inquired I of their master.

'Fust rate, sir!' was the reply. '*They* don't tell no lies, they don't—not like some o' them *meetin' parsons!*' he added.

We were not long before we were in the thick of the fun. Fred being anxious to thin the rabbits down in a wood at the end of the park, as they were playing Old Harry with some young trees he had been planting hard by, we commenced operations there forthwith. I opened the ball by killing a cock pheasant, which the renowned Jumiter put up out of the ditch just as we entered the wood, whilst Fred did ditto to a wood pigeon, who, startled by the report, came bustling out over our heads in a desperate hurry from an adjacent fir-tree. And now, led by the keeper, we came to the first head of holes.

Out of their bags came the ferrets, and in the holes they were turned before one could almost realise the fact. Two minutes had not elapsed before an extra cock of Jumiter's ears announced that he heard sounds of the enemy.

A sudden rumbling was now distinctly heard, and in a trice out bolted a rabbit, literally at express pace. Bang! went Fred's gun.

'I think I've killed him, but I'm not sure, it's so thick just there,' exclaimed he.

'On you go, you two!' said Stratton, addressing Jumiter and Rodney.

Before the words were well out of his mouth, away went the dogs like lightning.

'They've got him all right, and there's another one in; so look out!' observed Stratton, all in a breath.

A second afterwards, and sure enough a faint squeak was heard, and the ragged-looking pair emerged out of the bushes as he spoke, carrying the defunct rabbit, who was nearly as big as they were, between them. They then deposited it at their master's feet, flatly declining to hand the quarry over to the keeper, who stretched out his great hand for it, and was promptly answered by a growl from Jumiter; and licking their lips with a decided air of relish, sat down on their tails again, their ears cocked more than ever, to wait the advent of another rabbit.

Never did I come across such a ferreter as Stratton. Whether his ferrets were something out of the common, or what it was, I know not; but this it is—the rabbits bolted as I never saw rabbits bolt before or since. If they attempted to do the mean, and showed the slightest disposition not to come out, 'Where is he, Rodney?' was Stratton's cry, and that acute dog would, no matter how big the hole was, indicate by scratching whereabouts the beleaguered animal was. Then an iron rod was prodded into the ground, and after that the spade was put into requisition by the boy Bill, and the rabbit dug down to and hauled ignominiously out, to be knocked on the head or turned out and shot, as the case might be.

By the time John Footman appeared with the luncheon we had killed the best part of fifty rabbits, and Stratton richly deserved all the beer he got and the glass of sherry Fred gave him, and which he drank, after the manner of his class, at a gulp, exclaiming by way of a toast, as he did so, 'Genelmen both,' having previously turned his back on us.

After luncheon we again resumed operations, but after an hour of it Fred voted it cold. So we took up the ferrets, and proceeded to beat one or two small coverts for what we could get.

Eight brace of pheasants, a brace of partridges (which latter we picked up on the fallow as we marched from covert to covert), a sprinkling of hares, and a lot more rabbits, were the result. Altogether, as we both agreed, a very satisfactory wind up to the season.

'Go in and get some beer, Stratton, before you go,' I overheard Fred say to that prince of ferreters, as we once more reached the house; 'and here's a sovereign for you.' 'And,' added Fred by way of an afterthought, 'don't go and make a beast of yourself with it.'

'Me!' replied Stratton, with the injured air of a man who had never been drunk in his life. '*No fear!* I'm like Jumiter there—*never drinks unless it is I'm thirsty!* Do I, Jumiter?'

Jumiter wagged his stump of a tail, and winked his eye, as much as to say, 'that's quite correct, old boy!' and his master, with a 'Good night, genelmen,' bent his steps towards the servants'-hall in quest of the longed-for beer-jug, and we saw him no more.

A HYKER RACE.

By WILF POCKLINGTON.

WHAT on earth is a hyker?'

I have had a fairly comprehensive acquaintance with boats, from the Bydarka of the Pacific coast to the Ice-yacht of Poughkeepsee, but a 'hyker' was something new to me, and as my friend, Tom Sinclair of Philadelphia, captain of the Southwark Yacht Club, was recapitulating the attractions of the regatta, which was to take place in a month's time, and urging the advisability of my attendance thereat, the phrase 'hyker race' caught my ear, which caused me to put the query with which this paper opens.

Tom answered, 'It's an aquatic racehorse, a veritable flyer; words utterly fail to describe it, and, as you are always "gone" upon novelties, or things you have not met with before, you had better promise right away that you will come.'

I looked over my engagement list, and found that, by 'begging off' a trivial half promise for a week's fishing, I could make the City of Brotherly Love about that time; so I accepted the offer of a room in Tom's house, and in due time put in an appearance.

Philadelphia is the largest city in the United States, which is a startling remark, but a true one, at least in one sense, as it does actually cover more ground than any other city within its city limits, and is the most spread-eagled place I ever struck. Southwark, where Tom lived, was at one time a small town within the limits of the city of Philadelphia, but as the city spread, became first the lower part, and then merged completely into it, becoming as much an integral part thereof as Charing Cross is of London.

Of course my first visit was to see these boats with the queer name, and I found them fully as peculiar in appearance as in nomenclature. The fleet of the Southwark Yacht Club is composed entirely of these boats, and the amount of fun to be obtained out of them is simply astounding. They are about fifteen feet long over all, without a deck, and have a mast set well up in the bow, like an American cat-boat; they carry one sail only, and that, at first sight, appears about twice too large for the small craft, being as large as the mainsail of a large-sized yacht, and is of the same shape. There is no ballast whatever except two-legged; that is to say, her crew of four or five men are her ballast, and act as such under the direction of the captain. In order to utilise their weight so as to prevent capsising, the unknown genius who invented the 'hyker' devised a scheme of fastening to the centre-board the mast and lower yard of the sail, to the latter of which is rigged several ropes long enough to hang over the side into the water; and attached to their ends are bars of wood, on which hang the human ballast as directed. Of course, the main idea being simple enough, I grasped it at once, but was anxious to see it put into practice; and became so interested that on the day of the race I was taken by Tom on board as a passenger, with the understanding that I was to obey orders and steer, whilst he filled the double position of captain and ballast-bag.

When the starting-gun was fired no less than twenty-seven 'hykers,' with their crews frantically hauling up the sails, dipped across the line.

What sails they were!

I stood with the tiller in my hand, watching the great sheet spread and rise higher and higher until I thought it would never be hauled up.

'We are never going to try and carry that rag, are we, Tom?' I asked. 'Why, if there comes a puff of wind she'll go over like a shot.'

'Not she,' laughed Tom. 'Wait until you see the ballast at work.'

The start had taken place at a somewhat shady spot, and as we glided quietly along, sixth in place, my eyes mechanically roved around in search of the yachtsman's priceless boon, a breeze. There it was, right ahead, at first just ruffling the water

Hike over boys!

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where it crept in between two patches of wood, then developing into a good wholesome blow a hundred yards further on. I rather quaked, not for fear of a ducking, for I could swim well enough, but because I hate to lose a race, and appearances did not endorse my sanguine host's statement.

'Put her right across for that white house, and keep her there,' said Tom. 'Now, boys, over to windward as soon as we strike the ripples; one at a time, mind.'

As the breeze caught us, the huge sail filled and bellied; then over she heeled, as though she would turn bottom upwards.

'Hike over, boys! Quick!' and one by one the ballast scrambled to windward, and perched themselves on the gunwale, holding the bars of wood in their hands.

We literally flew through the water. I never travelled so fast in a sailing vessel in my life, and it seemed to me as though the great sail would tear the stick clean out of her. Running right across the broad river we reached the other side, and Tom said, 'Bring her up gently, old man, and give the boys a chance to get over quietly. Now then, over you go!'

I gently put the helm down, Tom watching the sail very critically, as man after man of the ballast slid over to the other side. Just as she swung round a sudden gust caught her; over she heeled, while the boys to windward craned right over until they almost stood upon their heads.

'Shall I bring her up a little,' I shouted.

'No!' sang out Tom, as another gust caught her; 'Hike over, right over!' and as she appeared to be laying right down, every one of the crew appeared to make a spasmodic leap, the ropes stretched taut, and the wooden bars disappeared in the water, followed by the men as they tumbled head over heels. The effect of 800 or 1000 pounds of ballast conveniently dumped like this at a moment's notice, has a great effect upon a boat, and, under the sudden pressure of weight produced by the crew floundering up and sitting on those cross-pieces, our craft steadied herself, and ran smoothly along under just as much sail as she could carry. There those fellows sat, a ludicrous sight, but in dead earnest; every wave washed them up to the neck, and as the puffs came and went a lurch to windward ducked them completely. Right across the river we ran, with the water lashing and surging up against her stem, through the tremendous speed at which we were going, as though it would sweep over even the high bow with which these boats are built.

Swiftly though we ran, the other boats were making equally good time, in fact, gaining a little on us if anything. I had been so busy watching the manœuvres of my crew that I had not found time to look around at the rivals we were competing with. I drew Tom's attention to the fact; but he replied,—

'That's all right; keep her going as she is now, and we will show them our heels when we commence to run for home.'

As we neared the opposite shore the breeze grew steadier, and our ballast commenced crawling back into the boat.

'That was rather a bad break,' said Tom, as he scrambled aboard, dripping with water. 'We did not intend to go quite over, only to kind of stand on our heads with our heels on the boat, but that sudden lurch in the last puff sent us flying all ways for Sunday.'

Rounding up for the next tack one of the boats in front of us had not got her ballast aboard quickly enough, and as they climbed up she caught the wind, heeled over, and tumbled them all into the sail, putting her out of the race, and leaving her half full of water for the tug to tow home, when she would be righted and bailed out.

A curve in the river gave us a moderately fair wind, and we bowled along merrily after our leaders, passing two of them, and placing ourselves third.

'How she does speed on a wind to be sure,' said Tom. 'See, there's the buoy; let me swing her round it, and you'll learn something.'

As he spoke he took the tiller, and, running her out very wide of the buoy, according to my ideas, put her on the wind, ran up almost touching it, and then screwed her around it with her head for home, gaining second place by this exhibition of river-sailing, and challenging the leader in a race for home.

We had to make two tacks before we reached the turn in the river, which would give us a good fair wind for home, and the breeze was slowly going round, so that we might anticipate a rattling finish. Along we sped, and Tom, after looking somewhat anxiously at our rival, left the gunwale, and coming aft sat down near me.

'If we lose this race, old man, you will be the Jonah.'

'Why?'

'Well, our opponent yonder is carrying more men than we are, that's more weight; and she dare not throw them off as we shall, because her captain does not know the weather as I do, and he thinks it is going to blow puffy. So it is, but not until we get home. Never puffs on this river until it gets round.'

I did not quite understand what he meant, but did not ask him, as I knew I should soon learn. As we rounded the turn we increased our speed, but our opponent did the same. Three miles to go, and we were only holding our own.

'Mike,' said Tom, and significantly raised his eyebrows.

The big Irishman laughed, took off his boots, tied them to the mast, and quietly dropped overboard to be picked up by the tug.

'One hundred and eighty pounds gone by the board,' said Tom, and nodded to another fellow, who quietly followed the Irishman.

The result was seen at once; imperceptibly, but surely, we crept up, until our opponent, noticing it, dropped a couple of men overboard, and finding we still gained, dropped a third.

'Aha!' laughed Tom. 'We have the legs of them!'

Entering into the last mile the wind freshened up, and we dropped two more men with such good effect that we ran almost level when only a hundred yards from home. Men were cheering, ladies waving their handkerchiefs, as we tore up the home stretch; no one was left in the boat but Tom and I.

'Keep her going, old man, and let the sail down when you hear the gun,' said he, as he dropped over the stern.

I took one more glance at our rival, and it seemed to me that we held a slight advantage; another second, and the gun boomed out. I sprang to the sail, letting it go with a run.

'How's that?' I yelled to the umpire's steam yacht.

'Won by a foot,' was the reply. And that was my introduction to the 'hyker.'

They are extraordinary boats, and, if introduced into English waters, would astonish some of the owners of small fast-sailing craft.

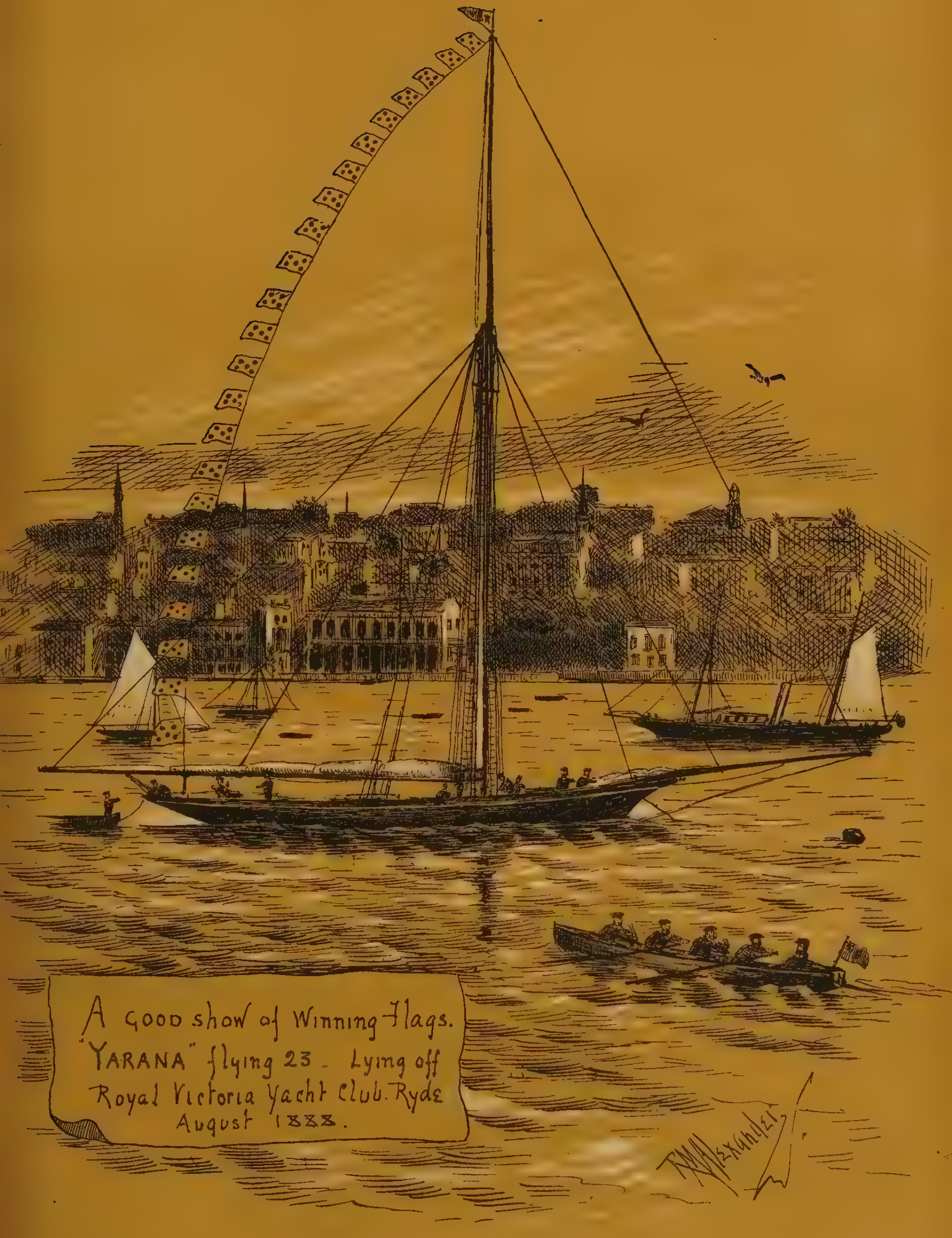
NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

HUNTING IN HARD TIMES' is the title of a neatly bound collection of twenty sketches by Miss G. Bowers, which pictorialise the sporting adventures of one who styles herself 'a confirmed old maid' and her bachelor brother John. They are as full of the right sort of character as is invariably to be found in the sketches of this artist, and will be none the less enjoyable to sportsmen, and ladies too, for the touch of sentiment with which it concludes, suggesting, as it unmistakably does, the possibility of some other person's sister being John's companion on a future occasion. The work is published by Chapman & Hall.

TESTIMONIALS accumulate in favour of *Jeyes' Sanitary Compounds*. Not only is it admitted that their preparations are of the best as external disinfectants and purifiers for stable, kennel, and farm use, but some of the most eminent veterinary authorities report that for internal remedies *Jeyes' Fluid* is invaluable. Amongst others, Professor Froehner, of the Veterinary High School of Berlin, combines it with various drugs in the form of pills for horses and dogs, whilst, as an antiseptic, Professor Albrecht of Wilenstephan testifies to its being superior to most others.

THE art of *Horse Breaking*, or, as some prefer to call it, horse educating, is very practically treated in a work by Captain M. H. Hayes, and published by W. Thacker & Co. The author's knowledge of this subject (which he presents with much originality and completeness) is well recognised, especially in India, where, for many years, he lectured upon and gave instruction in this and cognate subjects, and where also he not only raced but trained horses. The chapters devoted to handling with safety raw and vicious horses are specially valuable, and the fifty-two illustrations, by Mr. J. H. Oswald Brown, are admirably executed, and materially assist in elucidating the text. The perusal of this volume will be attended with pleasure and edification by all interested in horses.

To effectually shoe horses without the use of nails is, without question, a desideratum, as there is little doubt many valuable animals are annually ruined in consequence of being pricked by careless or inexperienced farriers. *The Adjustable Horse Shoe Syndicate*, 20 Budge Row, E.C., claim for their *Nailless Horse Shoe* that it can be attached or detached in a fraction of a minute, yet cannot be removed accidentally, and further, that it is as durable and cheap as those in present use. Owners of horses would do well to make themselves familiar with this new invention.



A good show of Winning Flags.
"YARANA" flying 23. Lying off
Royal Victoria Yacht Club. Ryde
August 1888.

FORES'S
SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

A DAY WITH *YARANA'S* DESIGNER.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'

DOWAN HILL was at the commencement of the present century a favourite bird-nesting place for the boys of Glasgow—the Bogles, the Buchanans, the Dennistouns, the Flemings, and the Finlays, not to mention the Jarvies of the Sautmarket, immortalised by Scott in *Rob Roy*. The Broomielaw, where now are to be seen hundreds of stately ships, was but a broom-clad bank where the herring smacks grounded at ebb tide and discharged their cargoes of potatoes from Bute, or herring besoms from the Island of Arran. Glasgow has become a great place since then we cannot help thinking as we leave the Great Exhibition now being held and by way of Kelvin Bridge make our way to the house of one of Glasgow's most successful naval architects. Before the days of old John Wood, of Port Glasgow, who designed the historical steamboat *Comet* (the first in Britain), boats and carts were occasionally built in the same shed, it is alleged, and possibly more interest was taken in the waggon-like crafts than in those which were propelled by wind. The ghosts of John Wood and Henry Bell watch, 'tis said, the passing of the huge Atlantic greyhounds from the Bowling Hills, and think of the days when men pronounced steamboats the productions of idiots. Around us as we walk—no doubt in the past the brown bushes crackled in summer—now are to be seen long terraces of palatial-looking houses, the homes of Glasgow merchant princes and successful ship-builders. In the dining-room of one of these we receive a warm welcome from our old friend Mr. G. L. Watson, whose name has been well known in yachting circles for many years, and who still has a fighting flag to the front in the banner of Mr. Ralli, so well carried to victory by the *Yarana*, the fastest vessel of her size ever seen in British waters. Tall and lithe, Mr. Watson would pass at a first glance for some young Corinthian yachtsman of five-and-twenty, but he assures us that he made his first appearance in this world on October 30th, 1851, just two months after the Cup alluded to had been won by the *America* schooner at Cowes. When he rises to receive some letters which have just been brought in by his little Scotch housemaid, who might enact the part of 'Mattie' in *Rob Roy* any day without change of costume, we can perceive a slight 'draughtsman's set' about the shoulders, formed by twenty years' stooping over the drawing-board, and a currycomb full of grey hairs speak of anxious study of 'water lines,' 'hollow bows,' 'angles of stability,' and many other problems, which are continually puzzling the minds of the modellers of vessels. Whilst he glances over his correspondence, the bulk of which, it is needless to state, is all about ships, from the huge ocean steamer to the three-ton cutter yacht or the modern self-righting lifeboat (for he has recently been appointed consulting naval architect to the Royal Lifeboat Institution), we have leisure to look down from the windows on the tall masts of the ships and gigantic chimney-stacks of the ship-building yards which mark the course of the Clyde below.

The hands of the little cabin clock on the mantelpiece, a yachting prize won many years ago—indeed, the first won by the famous five-tonner *Vril*—indicates that it is five minutes to six, and the hammers of thousands of artisans are still in full ply. One accustomed to the sounds of ship-building labour readily detects the heavy clang which tells of the bending of some huge iron frame (the counterpart of the old oak rib of the wooden vessel which Longfellow sung of) over the sharp, clattering echoes of the mallets of the rivetters, as they drive home the red-hot bolts to the side of the steel plates of some new Atlantic greyhound. Sharp at six the noisy hum of industry gives way to the loud screams of a hundred steam whistles, and the artisans pour outward through the gates in dense crowds to their homes, for the work of the day is over. Each of these loud whistles has its particular pitch, and all are known to Mr. Watson, who remarks regarding a very discordant one, 'That was very pleasant music to me some years ago; that is from the yard of R. Napier & Sons, whose chimney-stack you may see there above the tallest of the houses.'

When sixteen years of age the designer of the now famous *Thistle* was indentured as an apprentice with Messrs. Napier & Sons, who were then the leading shipbuilders, and had turned out a few years previously the well-known ironclad *Black Prince*, long since outclassed as a war vessel. Dr. Watson, his father, was one of the best Latin scholars in Scotland, and a man of strong literary tastes and sympathies. When the late Shirley Brookes fell ill on a visit to Glasgow he was his medical attendant, and a lasting friendship followed. Thackeray, too, the doctor had the honour of entertaining when on a tour in Scotland. Dr. Watson's father having also been a doctor, and his paternal grandfather a minister, it was his desire that 'young George' should attend the University at Glasgow and qualify himself for one of the learned professions; but for this he showed little or no inclination—and a good job too, for he would have set the pulpit afloat. His mind seemed to run all towards mechanics, though his brother, Mr. T. Malcolm Watson, possessed a strong bias towards literature and play-writing, and promises to draw houses as well as Mr. G. L. can draw ships. Readers of *Fores's Sporting Notes* who have been to Corney Grain's well know *Tally Ho!* and *Wanted, an Heir*. Within a little more than a month after he had seen his son indentured with Messrs. Napier & Sons, Dr. Watson succumbed to a painful illness, brought on by blood poisoning. This was unfortunate, as he was just about at the head of his profession in Glasgow at the time.

It is from his mother's side of the house, however, that Mr. Watson draws his undoubted mechanical abilities; and his eye glances up to an oil painting of a young lady, which hangs surrounded by pictures of famous yachts. This is a portrait executed fifty years ago of Mrs. Dr. Watson, when Miss Burstall, the daughter of Timothy Burstall, a marvellously clever man in his day, and who would have been one of our most eminent engineers had he possessed a little more practical knowledge than he did. He was a competitor for fame with George Stephenson, and constructed an engine with a view to beating the famous Rocket. Scott Russell and he worked together at a steam coach, and after that he (Burstall) almost ruined himself by numerous inventions—such as indiarubbers for railway and other carriages, tubular boilers for steamboats, a system of jet propulsion, and other ideas, which might have proved successful had the inventor in youth been given a sound practical training.

This practical training, it was very resolved, should be given to the nephew ; and five years in all departments of Messrs. Napier's yard, then under the management of 'Mr.,' afterwards Sir William Pearce, Bart., the head of the great Fairfield firm, drawing, modelling, and superintending the construction of vessels, well qualified him for his chosen profession of naval architect. 'Billy Pearce's boys,' as they were then termed, now fill good situations all over the world ; it was reserved for our host, however, to stay at home.

It was not till he had left Messrs. Napier & Sons, and entered into an engagement with Messrs. Inglis & Sons, shipbuilders, on the opposite side of the river, that he evinced any particular fondness for yacht-building. Mr. Wyllie's handsome cutter, *Cimara*, built by Steele & Co., of Greenock, and a famous racing vessel in her day, was hauled up in the yard. The hull of this vessel was almost daily admired and inspected by Messrs. Inglis & Sons' new draughtsman, with the result of his coming to the conclusion that yacht-builders were all wrong in their ideas. So he designed a five-ton cutter called the *Peg Woffington*, with a tremendously broad beam and only nine inches draught of water, but with an enormously deep metal keel, the first ever affixed to a yacht. The *Peg* had a ram-bow, and would have formed a very formidable competitor in maintaining the rule of the road at sea if she had been fast enough to catch a rival crossing her in the wrong tack. 'It is no use trying to prove to your schoolmaster,' says our host naïvely, 'that four times five are twenty-five—in plain words, the scientific principles upon which I had designed the boat were wrong.'

In 1874, when he had started for himself as a naval architect and surveyor, an Irish gentleman gave him an order for a five-ton cutter. This boat, the *Clotilde*, was built in some private wood-yard on the south side of the Clyde, with quite as much secrecy as surrounded the *Thistle*, for no one cared a brass farthing then about what 'young Watson' should turn out. A boat named the *Pearl*, built by Fife, of Fairlie, had literally held the Scotch yachting waters for years. Several five-ton cutters had been built to beat her, but all failed. One day, late in the season, the *Clotilde*, in a fresh breeze, went down to the starting line with *Pearl* just hanging close upon her quarter, and waiting, in the opinion of onlookers, her own time to administer a drubbing. To the surprise of them all, the new boat well beat the champion twice round the course, and that too in the best of weather for testing sailing boats of the size. This was at Millport Regatta, and within sight of the famous yacht-building yard at Fairlie. *Clothilde*, having been built for racing in Dublin Bay, was five and a-half tons, an extra half ton having been allowed in class measurement on the other side of the Channel, and Clyde rules only admitting boats of 'clean five,' *Pearl* was awarded the race on an objection having been lodged by her owner. The result was not, however, less satisfactory to *Clothilde's* designer and his friends. The famous five-ton cutters, *Vril* and *Freak*, were designed by him in 1876; then followed the *Verve*, ten-ton cutter; afterwards *Quiraing*, ten-ton cutter, champion of her class in the year she came out; next the *Madge*, which created quite a sensation by her victories in America at the same time that *Oithoria* was winning fresh laurels for her designer on the coast of Australia. Our attention is directed to the models of *Quiraing* and *Madge*, all nicely finished, and mounted in polished black boards, both of them having ivory plates on the bows with the records of their first year's performances under the racing flags and burgees thus:—

QUIRAING.		MADGE.	
Started	25 times.	Started	24 times.
First prize	16 „	First prize	22 „
Second prize	5 „	Other prizes	2 „
Total money	331*l.* 10*s.*	Total winnings	240*l.*

A finely-executed model which hangs in the lobby he values most of all, though it is not a model of one of his own boats, but that of the celebrated schooner *Selene* (270 tons), and which was presented to him by Messrs. Steele & Co., of Greenock, on their giving up business. The other models we have previously had an opportunity of inspecting in his own working-room on the top flat of 108 West Regent Street. The most interesting are those of the five-tonners and ten-tonners, and they all show very clearly the evolution of the modern cutter, from *Clothilde* to *Doris*, and from *Doris* to *Queen Mab*. The model of the large screw steam yacht *Amy* (850 tons)—not the *Amy* of 700 tons with which he won the gold medal of the London Shipwright's Society, but a second of the same name—is also there; and those who visited the Liverpool Naval Exhibition will quite recollect it, from its being perfect in every detail of deck work, outfit, and rigging. And well it might, for it took well nigh a full year to execute.

In 1880 the performance of the famous steel cutter *Van-*

duara (the steel cutter *Punch Bowl* of Sambourne's cartoon in *Punch*) excited much attention, and finally established Mr. Watson's reputation as a designer of racing yachts of all sizes. This boat was followed, together with a fleet of smaller fry, from his drawing-board by the *May* (40-ton cutter) and the handsome *Marjorie*, which was not this year put into commission. The schooner *Lenore* won the gold medal of the London Shipwright's Society as the best model of her class, but was never raced in anything like a spirited manner, or she would, no doubt, very soon have lowered the colours of the famous *Miranda*, which belonged to the late Colonel Lampson. *Wendur*, the large yawl built for Mr. John Clark, formerly of the *Vanduara*, and owner of the handsome steam yacht *Mohican*, designed by Mr. Watson, and now at New York, was exceedingly fast when she first came out, but was only raced on what is known as the Northern Yacht Racing Circuit, and now is to be found under clipped wings, though possibly under her original canvas the fastest British boat yet built with the exception of *Thistle* or *Yarana*.

Conversation runs on the days of Old Lang Syne—happy opening and closing cruises of the Royal Northern and Royal Clyde Yacht clubs, in which we were mostly together ; and old regatta days at Largo, Rothesay, and Hunter's Quay. Poor Mackie and his many eccentric feats, many of them almost bordering on madness, are not forgotten ; nor is Ben Harris, of 'The Hound ;' whilst John Houston, Jack Woods, and many of the bye-gone school of yachting jockies, are asked after as old friends ; and the once familiar names on regatta programmes of *Fiona*, *Muriel*, *Pantomime*, *Egeria*, *Vanessa*, *Quickstep*, and many others, came up with the memory-waking ring of Auld Lang Syne. The early history of the Royal Clyde Yacht Club is related in anecdote fashion, and some rare jokes are told of Messrs. Samuel King, Barton Bell, T. L. Arnott, and many others of its founders and supporters who have long grounded on the great sand-bank. Cruises to Black Farland Bay, Tighnabruiach, are recruised ; old cruising matches between *Fiery Cross* and *Torpid* are read over and over again ; the abilities of favourite Scotch skippers, from Bob McKirdy and Bauldie Wright to Captain Barr, are called up and compared ; and no one seems to be left out, not even the big Newfoundland dog, which used to sit on the stern of Captain Hartwell's *Britannia* and bark protests against the *Bloodhound's* bowsprit or the sharp monkey which kept the masthead man company on the crosstree of Lieutenant Henn's yawl *Gertrude*. But the hands on the little clock indicate that the 'wee short 'oor ayont the twal'' is approaching, so we have our Doch and Dhorris and depart.

THE MARTINGTON FILLY.

By TOM MARKLAND.

THE public in general, and the *D. T.* in particular have recently been much exercised as to 'what to do with our girls.' I remember a time when the great problem in our family was what to do with our *Gus*. Reggie was in the army, and the pater vowed he couldn't repeat that experiment; so, as Gus gave no great promise of forensic ability and had an invincible dislike to anything entailing office work, it was eventually decided to 'put him into the Church.'

After being 'plowed' twice for 'smalls,' he managed to scramble through with a 'poll' degree, and was supposed, from an academical point of view, to be duly qualified to enter for the Ecclesiastical Stakes.

The 'old leaven,' however, was stronger than ever in the sucking archbishop's breast. His sporting proclivities had by no means lessened in intensity under the discipline of *Alma Mater*, and his other *mater* might well feel anxious as to how Gus would pass through his novitiate. Long and serious were the lectures she gave him as to the impropriety of some of his favourite expressions, that smacked of Newmarket more than of the classic shades by the Isis.

On one occasion I was present when Gus was 'put through his paces,' as he termed it.

'Now, Gus, you see this letter; it is from my old schoolfellow, Miss Martington, a very wealthy old maid, and patroness of the living of Martington, the incumbent of which is a very old man nearly eighty.'

'Good stayer!' interpolated Gus.

'Now, do try to be serious, my boy. In this letter she inquires for a curate, and as good as says that if he comes up to her ideal of what a clergyman ought to be, he will succeed to the living whenever it falls vacant.'

'What are the stakes? Oh! I beg pardon, I mean what is the stipend?' queried Gus.

'Eight hundred, and a capital house and grounds; but you might as well try for the moon, unless you make up your mind to drop your racing vocabulary and conform to Miss Martington's ideas, for she looks on the right of appointing a successor to Dr. Honeywood as carrying with it the utmost responsibility; so the matter stands thus. You have here a splendid chance to rise in your profession, a chance which, if once lost, is not likely to occur again; do, for my sake, dear Gus, try to avail yourself of it.'

'All right, mother, I'll keep on the right side of the flags if I can; but I hope the old lady won't handicap me too heavily, nor the old gentleman make a waiting race of it!'

'There you go again!' said his mother, with a sigh. 'I want you to understand that nothing is so hateful to Miss Martington as what you call sporting "slang!"'

'I'll be as good as good can be when once I am fairly in harness, mother. You'll see what glowing accounts of your young colt—I mean curate—the post will bring you from Miss M. I shall put in full time at everything, from the Dorcas Society to the children's holiday sports; and as to my sermons, I know a very useful chap in town, named Feeder, who can supply you with the right article to suit all customers—that is, all patrons and patronesses; so I shan't come a cropper over them.'

'Well, I can say no more; but remember when I have once installed you at Martington it will all depend on yourself.'

Gus went to the curacy, and, greatly to my astonishment and to the *mater's* delight, glowing accounts *did* come, and pretty frequently too. 'All the parishioners,' wrote Miss Martington, '*adore* him, from the children upwards; and as Dr. Honeywood is growing very feeble, it is, I assure you, a great comfort to me that I have in the parish a clergyman on whom I can so thoroughly rely as on Augustus. His conversation, as well as his example, is calculated to improve the moral tone of all with whom he is brought into contact. Even old Joe Whistler, the jockey, who could never be induced to accept the ministrations of the clergy, or even to tolerate their visits, has been brought into a proper frame of mind through the "word spoken in season" by your son; and Burgin, the gamekeeper, has attended service three times, though he had never previously been inside a church since he was married!'

Such accounts as these put my mother in the seventh heaven, but the *pater* was less demonstrative, and remarked about 'new brooms' and 'reading between the lines.'

Nearly two years had passed, and the only anxiety that we experienced in connexion with Gus was from the alarming reports as to Dr. Honeywood's health. He might die before Gus was ordained a priest, especially as the Bishop was reputed to be rather 'stiff' on some parts of the examination; so we sincerely hoped the rector would 'hang on' till such time as my brother could step into his shoes.

But, alas! the old proverb about waiting for those articles till their owners are defunct proved true in our case, for one fine morning Master Gus came back to the paternal roof, having made his last appearance as Curate of Martington.

It happened thusly. Gus and his patroness were going to the church for some purpose, and he was carrying the huge key of the church door in his hand, when they came to the village green, where the children were engaged in various games, so they stopped to watch the youngsters and say a kind word to one and another before passing on. Among the rest, a boy and a girl were having a race across the green, the girl being rather taller than the boy. Three times the victory fell to the former, and Gus, who was always interested in a race, from the Derby to a trot between two fleas over a hot plate, thought the boy didn't 'get off' so well, and accordingly he started them 'fair,' but the result was still the same. After thinking for a second or two Gus, who was rapidly becoming oblivious of Miss Martington's proximity, had a happy thought.

'Here,' cries he to the girl, 'you carry this key, and then I'll start you fair again.'

As Gus counted 'one, two, three,' and 'away,' off they went, and our hero leaned forward with a hand on each knee keenly watching the effect of his impromptu handicap. This time the verdict was reversed, the boy won by about half a yard; but what was the old lady's horror to hear the Reverend Augustus Markland, who had by this time completely forgotten her existence, cry out in an ecstacy of delight, '*D—— it, I thought so; I thought the filly couldn't carry the weight.*'

Well, the result was as I have stated. Poor Gus was returned as 'unsuitable,' and he told me over our weed in the evening that he really was sorry for his mother's sake, especially as she had been sending him pretty liberal remittances on the strength of his good behaviour, part of which were devoted to supplying Joe Whistler, Burgin, and other 'converted' ones, with tobacco and other little luxuries which they had a difficulty in acquiring, as Miss Martington's charity ran more in the soup, medicine, and blanket line. Well, what was Gus to do? He set to work to read up the subjects for the bishop's examination, and eventually passed it; but, meantime, the story of the Martington filly got bruited abroad, and we had to endure no end of roasting on the subject, while the *mater* got very 'down' about 'poor Gussy's' prospects.

He preached occasionally in the village church, and as he gave a good price for his sermons, and read them very well, any one might do worse than sit under my revered brother. This seems to have been the opinion of a stranger whom we invited into our pew one day, and who appeared to be paying the closest attention to the discourse. After the service this stranger joined the *pater* as they walked down the church path, and, thanking him for his courtesy, introduced himself as Lord Westerdale. Being invited to lunch he accepted, and informed my father that, having heard of the 'handicap,' he had been anxious to come over and hear the hero of that story. 'And,' he went on, 'I am so pleased with what I have seen and heard, and also with the accounts I have received of him from friends at Cambridge that I am prepared to offer him a better living than Martington as soon as he is in priest's orders.'

Of course the seniors were profuse in their thanks, and the Levite being summoned, received the good news with joy. Said Lord Westerdale, 'You may handicap all the boys and girls in the place if you like.'

* * * * * *

Gus has been rector of Moulsden now for over a decade; but, though in receipt of a good income, Nemesis has to some extent paid him out, for he is now handicapped *himself* by a quartette of girls and a ditto of boys; but he is very jolly under it all, and his wife, whom he married as soon as he became rector, seems quite happy in spite of her onerous domestic and parochial duties.

A TRIFLING MISTAKE.

By Finch Mason.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN that celebrated pack of foxhounds, the 'Old Harkaway'—better known, perhaps, to hunting men as the O. H. H.—meet, as they are accustomed to do several times in the course of each season, at Hoodman's Heath, the *rendezvous* is by no means a largely attended one. In other words, 'Hoodman's Heath' is not a popular fixture with Chatterboxshire sportsmen in general. Whether it is they don't like the place itself—a damp, unhappy-looking piece of common-land—with one or two tumble-down cottages and a disreputable-looking beerhouse at the far end, just where the hounds meet, and generally not a creature in sight but one or two grubby-looking children playing about, a few geese, a ragged-looking donkey, and the inevitable dirty old white horse —(nobody yet saw a common without a dirty old white horse browsing upon it. He is invariably there, go which day you will, and I always look upon the old white nag of the common as the most free and independent person I know, and respect and envy him accordingly. Has he a master? I always wonder; if so, who and what is he? Or can it be that he is his own property, and has turned himself out to grass for the rest of his life? He slouches along with such a 'don't care a rap for any one' sort of air, that I really think that the latter notion is the right one)— or whether it is that they dislike Splashington Wood, the huge, wet, straggling covert, that they always trot off to to draw first, which is full of man-traps in the shape of bogs, deep ditches, and other unpleasantnesses, and where it is quite on the cards that they may stop all day, though now and again, on rare occasions, they have managed to get quickly away, when a good run has been the result, is not for me to say. Perhaps, like the man who objected to the celebrated Doctor Fell, they do not know themselves. Anyhow, that does not matter. An unpopular fixture Hoodman's Heath undoubtedly is, and bar the real hard riders of the hunt —men whom nothing but the blackest of frosts would stop—a few farmers, and possibly a horse-breaker or two, the Chatterboxshire sportsmen are conspicuous by their absence.

If this sort of thing is always the case then when the redoubtable O. H. H. meet at Hoodman's Heath, how comes it to pass that on the particular Saturday we are now writing about—a day long to be remembered in the annals of the Hunt—such a crowd of equestrians, pedestrians, and carriage-folk put in an appearance on the shabby old common as the landlord of the 'Cat and Fiddle' (the beerhouse already mentioned), Jonathan Myler, declared he had only beheld once before, and that was forty years ago, when Tom the Tinker and Bermondsey Bill settled their little differences there for two hundred a-side? Well he remembered it too; for didn't the mob break into his house, and not only possess themselves, free gratis for nothing, of all that it contained in the eating and drinking line, but must needs add insult to injury by punching their victim's head for him on finding that, in consequence of not possessing the necessary license, he had no spirituous liquors to be consumed on the premises.

Well might dropsical old Jonathan stare, and the old white horse, who was blind with one eye and couldn't see much out of the other, prick up his ancient ears, and the geese clear off hastily, and the grubby little children run frightened into the tumble-down cottages at the unwonted sight!

What in the name of all that is wonderful brought all these good people in their best clothes and on their best horses to Hoodman's Heath this fine morning? We will explain.

A stranger in those parts, driving along the London Road, soon after passing Hoodman's Heath, could not fail to be struck by an imposing-looking structure of extremely modern appearance standing in the vicinity of the high road, with a frontage nearly as large as that of Buckingham Palace, which glared at everybody in an aggressive sort of manner from a park of but small dimensions compared with its own size. It was about the bran-newest edifice you ever beheld—painfully so, in fact—the sort of place that auctioneers are wont to describe as palatial, and that having been well stared at would cause an involuntary cold shudder to run through the said stranger—always supposing, that is, that he is a person of taste and culture—as he turned to question his charioteer as to what manner of man it belonged to.

The reply would probably be pretty much what one might expect. It was called 'The Hall'—not this Hall or that Hall, be it understood—but, 'The Hall;' and it belonged to Mister Marmaduke Midas, a gentleman from Birmingham, who hadn't built it much more than a year (spent a power o' money, he had, upon it), and who was very rich—the richest man in these parts, by a long way. He (the charioteer) *had* heered say that Mr. M. had a thousand pounds a-day, and two on Sundays, &c. &c.

That Jehu in estimating Mr. Midas's vast wealth at the figure he did was slightly exaggerating, goes without saying; but in describing that gentleman as the richest man in those parts, he was probably not far wrong.

Of course he was a snob. His neighbours were all agreed upon that point. They would go to his entertainments and draw in their breath at the sight of his gold plate; they would shoot his pheasants and drink his champagne, and flatter him to his face to any amount, and go home afterwards and pull him to pieces, and say, one to another, what a snob the fellow was. To hear their talk you would have thought it indeed a rare piece of condescension on their part honouring 'The Hall' with their presence at all.

One thing is certain: if Mr. Midas was a snob, he was a very liberal, hospitable sort of snob. Having made his 'pile' as he called it, he seemed determined to do his best to spend it; and what more could a man do, we should like to know?

This, then, was the gentleman who, on the Monday preceding the meet at Hoodman's Heath, might have been seen riding home from hunting in company with his '*fidus Achates*' Mr. John Fairfax, or Johnny Fairfax as he is usually called by his friends. When Mr. Midas, who, by the way, we omitted to mention was a bachelor, cut business and set up as a country gentleman, it was not to be wondered at, from his bringing up, that at first he was a trifle abroad so to speak. He possessed a long purse and his ideas were of the most expensive description. The palatial residence just mentioned being completed, the soul of its wealthy owner was on fire to distinguish himself, and there was only one reason against his doing so, which was that he didn't know how.

This being the case, like the sensible man he was, he proceeded to look about him for some one who did, to put him in the way of things and set him going.

In Johnny Fairfax, who, having spent all his money, now lived at home with his doating mother at Granby Grange, hard by 'The Hall,' Mr. Midas found the very man he wanted, ready-made to order as it were. A friendship struck up in the train to London one fine day, when the pair found themselves the sole occupants of a smoking carriage, cemented by a *tête-à-tête* dinner at 'The Hall' a few nights later, and the thing was done. With the first bottle of claret after dinner, Mr. Midas proceeded to make a clean breast of his position and requirements to his guest, and that gentleman, who was by no means dull of comprehension, quickly seeing 'which way the wind blew,' met his host half way, without loss of time or words, much to the capitalist's satisfaction; the consequence was that when the butler appeared with an anchovy toast and another bottle of Chateau Léoville, the pair were hard at work arranging schemes for the future on a scale of magnificence calculated to astonish the natives of Chatterboxshire to a very considerable tune. 'Good-night, old boy!' said Johnny about one o'clock in the morning, shaking hands with his host previous to getting into his dogcart to drive home. 'You leave it all to me, and if we don't wake 'em up a bit between us down in these parts it shan't be my fault: I flatter myself *I* know the ropes if any one does.' And seeing that Eton, Christchurch, and a crack and exceedingly fast cavalry regiment were responsible for Master Johnny's education, it would have been exceedingly odd had he not.

So it came about that, from that day forth, Johnny Fairfax constituted himself sole adviser to the millionaire up at 'The Hall,' and its owner could not say or do enough to show his gratitude. His friend bought his carriages and horses for him, engaged his servants, ordered his wine, chose his cigars, managed his shooting parties and entertainments generally—in short, saved him a world of trouble.

Nor was that all. The mere fact of Johnny—who was not only exceedingly popular with every one but had a reputation for being decidedly fastidious as to his intimates—being so 'thick' with Mr. Midas, sent that gentleman up a hundred per cent in their estimations.

It was no longer 'that snob Midas!'—'Have you called on that fellow at the Hall yet? they tell me he is an awful ruffian!' &c. &c. But on the contrary, it was ''Pon my word that chap Midas ain't half such a bad fellow when you come to know him—rather rough, but a good old chappie at heart!'—'Improves on acquaintance, what!'—'Can't be a bad sort, don't-cherknow, or Johnny Fairfax would'nt be so thick with him as he is—devilish particular fellow Master Johnny!' and so on.

We will now return to Mr. Midas and his worldly adviser, whom we left riding home together from hunting.

'Do you think it'll hurt this horse to come out again on Saturday, Johnny?' said the millionaire, between the whiffs of his cigar, addressing his friend Fairfax, and patting admiringly, as he spoke, the neck of the chestnut hunter he bestrode, a magnificent-looking animal, possessing power and quality combined, and with the most perfect manners it is possible to imagine.

'Hurt him! No, not a bit of it!' was the reply. 'Why he has done nothing to-day to speak of, and Hoodman's Heath is a shocking bad meet. They stick in Splashington Woods all day as a rule, and never do any good by any chance. I always pick out my worst horse when I go,' added the sagacious Johnny, 'take an extra supply of cigars, and never leave the middle ride—which is the only sound one of the lot, you'll find—on any consideration whatever.' Why do you ask, though? Have you got any particular reason for wishing to ride the chestnut on Saturday,' inquired Fairfax, emitting a perfect cloud of cigar smoke from his lips as he spoke; 'because, if you haven't, I should keep him, if I were you, until next week. They're at Croxley Court on Monday, recollect, one of our best meets, and it strikes me that the chestnut's just about the safest conveyance you've got in your stables. Lord! how well he carried me that Goodman's Gorse day! I wish I had got hold of such a clinker when I was in the —th,' ejaculated Johnnie, feelingly, 'I'd have won the Grand Military as sure as a gun.'

'I'll tell you,' rejoined Mr. Midas. 'The fact is, I've got a chap coming down to my shop on Friday to stay over Monday, a chap I've no doubt you've heard of—most people have—the great financier of Capel Court, the celebrated Halbert Hedward Slummers, Baron Slummers they term him, though why I don't know. Well, Slum, as I call him, has been very useful to me on more than one occasion, so I want to do the civil to him, you understand. One good turn deserves another, and as I don't know if he's much of a hand out hunting (though he rides in the Row, of course), I want to mount him on Saturday on something that's not only 'andsome, but gentlemanlike in his manners as well. Now I ain't much of a hossman myself,' said the plain-speaking Mr. Midas, 'don't pretend to be, indeed; but I must say I certainly do feel *at 'ome* whenever I get on the back of my friend here. Why, a child might ride him! I can't express my gratitood to you sufficiently, Fairfax, for buying me such a splendacious nag,' exclaimed Mr. Midas, with enthusiasm. 'Why, if anybody was to offer me a thousand to-morrow for him I wouldn't take it. A thousand, indeed! five wouldn't tempt me! though I'm not what you call a rich man, either,' remarked the millionaire, complacently, pulling out a silver cigar-case as he spoke, and lighting a fresh weed of expensive appearance as if to give the lie to his words.

'Well, you're right so far,' replied Johnny Fairfax, approvingly. 'Your friend, Baron what's-his-name, can't well go wrong on such a nag as that you're a-top of, and if he tumbles off during the day it will be his own fault, and not the horse's, you may take your solemn oath. By the way, Midas, how does your friend come by the names of Albert Edward? I thought the Heir Apparent was the only party who owned 'em in the kingdom. Not one of the royal family, is he?'

'Why, not exactly,' rejoined Mr. Midas, laughing; 'the fact is, that Slum was born on the very same day as his Royal 'Ighness, and his hasses of parents, not content with that honour, must needs keep the game alive by calling of their son Halbert Hedward after the hinfant prince. Like their confounded cheek, wasn't it? The chaff that goes on amongst the boys "on change,"' chuckled Mr. Midas, 'you'd 'ardly believe. "Where's H.R.H.?" says one. "Seen the Prince to-day?" inquires another. Such a game!'

* * * * * *

'And so Baron Slummer's godfathers and godmothers in his baptism, instead of calling him M. or N. as the case might be, chose to christen him Albert Edward, did they?' mused Johnny Fairfax at a late hour that same night as he betook himself to his virtuous couch in his mother's house. 'They did, did they? Ha! ha! Well, I venture to predict that Hoodman's Heath won't know itself next Saturday. What a mob there will be! If it ain't the 'best on record' it shan't be my fault, that's very certain.'

And, so saying, Mr. John Fairfax turned in with a very self-satisfied expression of countenance, and, being a gentleman possessing both a good digestion and an easy conscience, was quickly in the land of dreams.

CHAPTER II.

It is market-day in the little town of Chatterfield. The day is Tuesday, the hour is three o'clock in the afternoon, and its High Street wears quite a thriving appearance; as well it might, seeing that it is the only day in the week it gets a chance of doing so.

The farmers' ordinary at the 'White Hart' is just over, and the drivers, having wound themselves up with sundry glasses of brown brandy and water, hot *with* (farmers, I notice, always affect brown brandy), may now be seen pervading the town with extremely red faces, and smoking suspicious-looking cigars—cigars that would knock any one but the bucolic parties who are smoking them out of time in less than two minutes.

The carriages of the neighbouring gentry come rolling in by twos and threes. Little groups of people form on the pavement and discuss the affairs of the nation generally, and Chatterboxshire in particular. Cheery greetings—such as 'How are you, Tom?' 'Nicely, thankee, Squire; how's *yourself?*' 'Glad to see you about again, Colonel, after your fall!'—are heard on all sides. Pigs are grunting, cows are mooing, sheep are baaing, blue-smocked drovers are *cussing*—altogether, it is a busy scene this fine afternoon. So busy, indeed, as to cause Mr. Muslin, the haberdasher, a new arrival in the town, who, on account of stagnation of trade, has been dreaming of bankruptcy, and *felo de se* to follow, for some days past, to pluck up a bit, and to think that things might not be so bad after all.

There is no one person on this particular afternoon who receives more hearty greetings from high and low than that popular character Mr. Johnny Fairfax, who, having left his hack in charge of the ostler at the 'White Hart,' and partaken of a brandy-and-soda at the bar from the fair hands of Miss Polly, the fascinating and lively Hebe of the establishment, who thinks Capting Fairfax, as she calls him, *such* a nice gent, *and* so 'andsome, proceeds, cigar in mouth, to take a stroll through the town, and have a look at everything and everybody.

Of course such a popular character as Johnny Fairfax would naturally be button-holed right and left, and to-day, so many of his acquaintance did he meet that it took him precisely an hour and five minutes to get from the 'White Hart' to the market-place, which is distant some three hundred yards.

Now it is an extraordinary fact, but true, nevertheless, that every soul who encountered Master Johnny on that particular Tuesday afternoon went away with an amazed look on his countenance after a few minutes' conversation with him, and rushed off in frantic excitement to tell some one else some wonderful intelligence evidently much too important to be kept a secret.

'What's the news, Doctor?' exclaims old Joe Pitman, the recognised Paul Pry of the place, waylaying Doctor Bolus, and bringing that gentleman, who is hurrying along bursting with importance, to an anchor by seizing him by the lappel of his coat in a grasp of iron. 'What's the news, Doctor? I see you've got some. Is Queen Anne dead, or the Pope got a son? heh?'

'Haven't you heard?' exclaimed the other, putting on an air of apparent astonishment.

'Heard? No!' replied Joe, his eyes nearly starting out of his head with anxiety.

'What, not about the Prince?'

'No, sir, *not a word!* W—w—what about him?'

'Simply this, that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales' (Doctor Bolus emphasised each word with a little tap on the other's breast with a fat forefinger) 'is about to honour our friend Mr. Midas up at "The Hall" with a visit, and will attend the meet of the hounds next Saturday at Hoodman's Heath!'

'God bless my soul! you don't say so!' exclaimed Joe, puffing out his cheeks until they looked ready to burst.

'I do, indeed, though,' replied the Doctor; 'perfectly true, I assure you. Captain Fairfax told me himself. Good-bye, I'm in a great hurry.' And away went the Doctor to tell the news to some one else.

Johnny Fairfax had indeed done his work well. Before nightfall every horse and conveyance in the town was ordered for Hoodman's Heath on Saturday. Spavin, the livery stable-keeper, could have let his old screws ten times over if he had liked.

* * * * * *

When Mr. Midas and his friend Baron Slummers (a fat-looking party, decidedly stock-exchangey as to his dress, and of rather a Semitic cast of countenance), accompanied by Johnny Fairfax, cantered becomingly up to the meet at Hoodman's Heath on Saturday morning, they were fairly astonished—at least, Mr. Midas and the Baron were—not only at the dimensions of the crowd, but at the extraordinary reception they received as they rode up. Hats and handkerchiefs, even flags, were waved (Mr. Chump, the sporting butcher of Chatterfield, had mounted a scarlet banner from his wagonette on which was inscribed, in gold letters, 'God Bless Our Sportsman Prince!'), and the cheering was something tremendous.

'Wod ad edorbous quandidy of beople!' exclaimed the

Baron, who invariably talked as if he had a bad cold in his head; 'id remides me of a meed of the Queed's 'ouds at Sald Hill or Maidedhead Thicked! Ad how they cheer you, Midas! I had do idea you were such a popular characder, old bad. You ought to stad for the Coundy—upod my word you ought! Oughtn't he, Captig Fairfax?'

'Just what I'm always telling him!' replied Johnny, nearly beside himself with suppressed laughter at the result of his handiwork—a result, indeed, that more than exceeded his expectations. 'But excuse me, Midas, old feller' (Mr. Midas was taking off his hat and bowing right and left in response to the cheers), 'it's not *you* the Johnnies are going for; it's our friend the Baron here they're all so glad to see. *Salaam* to 'em, Baron. That's the style! *you've* fetched 'em! I told you it was meant for you.'

And, sure enough, no sooner did Baron Slummers raise his hat and distort his face into an idiotic sort of simper than the cheering burst out with renewed vigour.

'I dever was bore surprised id by life,' remarked the Baron to Johnny, as, tired at last of bowing, he once more replaced his hat on his head. 'How do *you* account for these good beople making such a fuss about be?'

'Oh,' replied Johnny, 'they're a real sporting lot down here, don't you know; and they've heard of those big'—'swindles' he was about to say, but just changed it in time to—'those big specs of yours that have made your name so famous everywhere. God bless you!' went on the veracious joker, 'your name's quite a household word down in Chatterboxshire, I can assure you! I'm only sorry,' added he, 'the noble Master isn't out; he'd tell you the same thing!'

'Well, it's very gradifying, I busd say,' exclaimed the Baron —'very gradifying, I'b sure; and I shall make a poind of telling all by cidy friends of by recebshion in Chatterboxshire when I go bag to towd on Monday, you bay depend.'

At this juncture the hounds moved off, and the crowd of foot people parting right and left in response to some persuasive language on the huntsman's part, a lane was made through which they passed, closely followed by Mr. Midas, his illustrious guest, and Johnny Fairfax.

'Well, he's a credit to his butcher, I'm blowed if he aint!' remarked Mr. Chump, the sporting butcher before mentioned, to his wife, eyeing the plump form of the Baron as that gentleman trotted gaily by, hat in hand, bowing gracefully to the bystanders.

Many and various were the remarks made on the pseudo-Prince's appearance as he passed. Mrs. Mulleygrubs declared he was not a bit like his photographs; whilst, on the other hand, Mrs. Bloomfield, the lawyer's wife, who was the recognised authority in Chatterfield on all matters connected with the Court—and was, indeed, in herself a sort of *Queen* newspaper and *Court Circular* rolled into one—averred that she would have known the dear Prince *anywhere*—'there was no mistaking,' said she, 'the Gwelph expression about the nose and mouth!'

But the climax was reached when the long train of sportsmen arrived at the village of Snoresby, just on the other side of which was Splashington Wood. There, opposite the village school, drawn up three deep, and headed by their pastors and masters (the vicar of the parish, the Rev. Thomas Toady, his wife and family, and his curate), were all the school children in their best bibs and tuckers, who, the moment the hounds turned the corner full upon them, burst, at a given signal, into that well-known song of Brinley Richards—viz. 'God bless the Prince of Wales!'

A light suddenly dawned upon Baron Slummers. 'I do believe,' said he to Johnny Fairfax—'I do believe that they dake be for the Prince of Wales! Some beople *do* think I'm rather like his Royal Highdess!' added he, complacently.

Johnny could contain his gravity no longer, but burst into a fit of laughter.

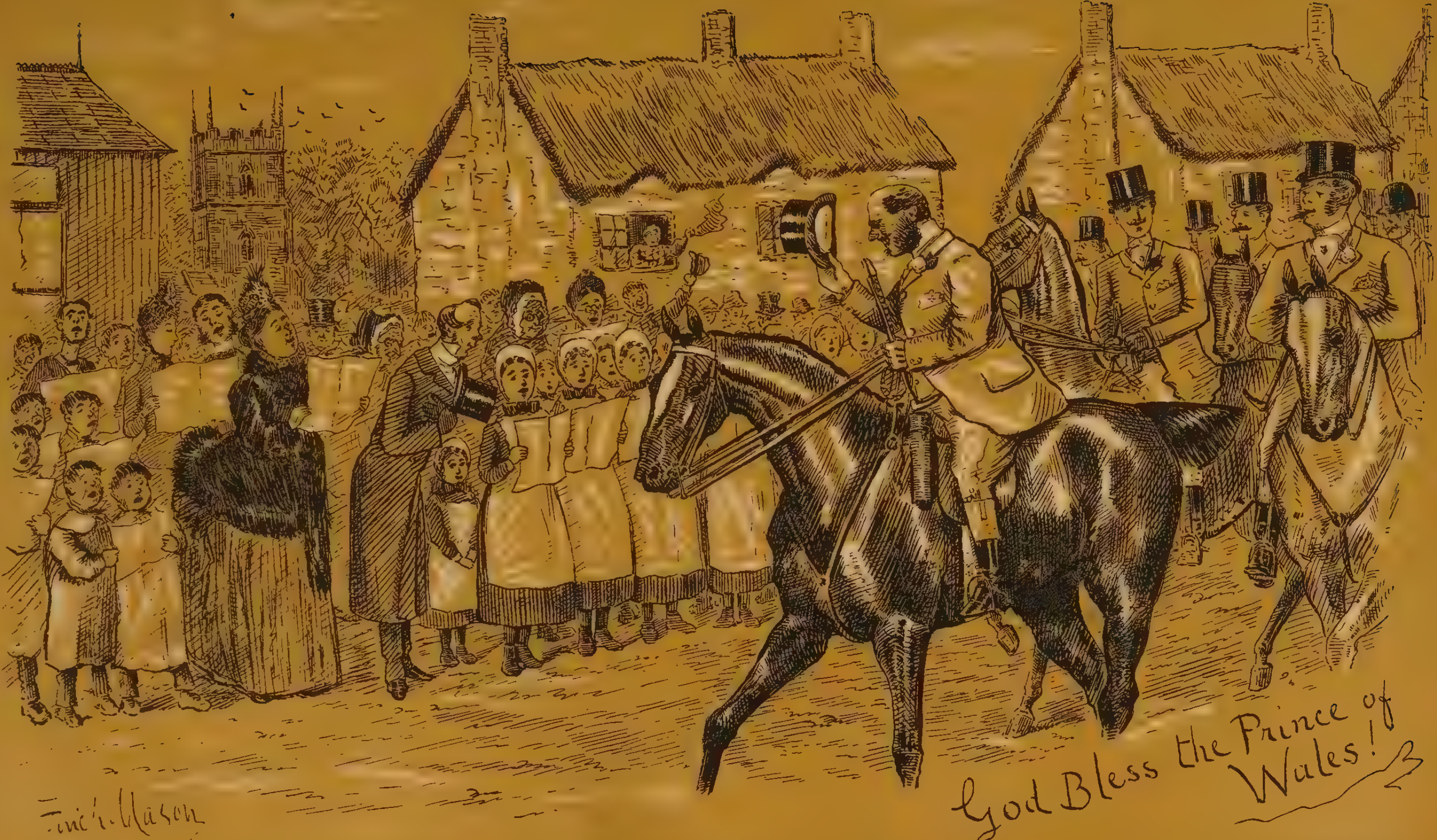
'You've guessed it at once, old chappie!' said he. 'Of course they do. Now I come to look at you, you are rather like him!—about the eyebrows, eh?'

* * * * * *

And everybody abused Johnny Fairfax the next day like a pickpocket, declaring it was shameful on his part to take them in so. ''Twas really too bad,' 'quite beyond a joke,' &c. &c.

To all of which Johnny, with a cheerful smile, replied, denying *in toto* that he had told any one of them that the Prince of Wales would be present at Hoodman's Heath. 'What I *did* say,' said the reprobate, 'was, that "Albert Eddard" was coming to stay with Midas up at 'The Hall,' and would hunt on Saturday—weather permitting. If all you duffers can't tell the difference between the Heir Apparent and a fat stockbroker you can't blame me, sure-*lie!*'

They did though, all the same.



God Bless the Prince of Wales!

see page 96.

'WI' ROD AN' GUN!'

By Captain Clark-Kennedy, F.R.G.S., &c., Author of
'Lays of Sport,' &c.

COME, hurry up! my comrade bold, to Euston Square we'll hie!
For August's bright and merry days again are drawing nigh:
And be our goal the corrie wild, the river, or the moor—
We'll 'tak' our fun, wi' rod and gun!' as eke in days of yore!

Chorus:

Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun
On river and on moor;
We'll kiss the lassies—bless their hearts!
(May *ours* be never sore!)
With conscience clear, each following year,
Toward the North we'll hie;
May many a happy autumn yet
Be ours before we die.

With rod and gun, and creel and dog, once more we take our stand
On the old familiar platform, with our ticket in our hand
And, as we start, where lighter heart than yours and mine to-day?
For speeding forth toward the North, our train is on the way!
Chorus: Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun, &c.

Adieu! awhile, ye joys of town, we leave you well content,
For we are bound to Scotland's hills, on joyous errand bent;
There shall we slay the bonnie grouse, and circumvent the trout;
And there, from many a foaming stream, we'll tempt the salmon out!
Chorus: Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun, &c.

May many an ancient scion of the sable blackcock fine,
Fall victim to the killing power of your good gun or mine;
And grouse in all their beauty, and in goodly numbers too,
Be credited, my gallant friend, each day to me or you.
Chorus: Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun, &c.

Then welcome, Scotland's heath'ry soil! once more a health to thee!
For bonnier land than Scotia's strand our eyes shall never see!
Grand ancient home of history, of legend, and of fame!
Dear modern home of purple hills, of porridge, and of game!
Chorus: Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun, &c.

Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun in thine enchanting land,
And bonnie maids we've kenned of old shall shake us by the hand,
And welcome us with smiles again: though Northern maids are shy,
They're sporting jades—those Scottish maids—when 'coming thro' the rye!'
Chorus: Wi' rod an' gun, we'll tak' our fun, &c.

MARRIED *v.* SINGLE.

By 'LEATHERHUNTER.'

IF you have ever seen the hunt sweep through a Midland village, you will have some idea of the completeness with which our annual match carried away the whole population high and low. It is an occasion of more or less absorbing interest in most villages, but in Mallowdale a series of favouring circumstances tended to accentuate the feeling, not the least of which was the time chosen, the Wednesday of the yearly village festival, when everybody was in a frolicsome mood. The scene of the contest was the village green, and Mallowdale rejoiced in a green of ample dimensions, round which the whole of the dwellings, with the exception of a few outlying 'lodges' and cottages such as the gamekeepers', crowded like spectators, some presenting a whole front, others peering between their more prominent neighbours, but all managing to get a glimpse from one or more of their diamond-paned windows at the modern Olympic games, as in days gone by they had watched the archers who practised on Sundays and holidays by royal command.

Each side had champions of tried prowess. Amongst the Benedicts Hugh Snell, the head-gardener at the Hall, and his son-in-law, Mark Staines, who was second in command in the horticultural department, were trundlers of renown, while, among the bachelor confraternity, the most notable son of the willow was undoubtedly Simon Pawkins the butler, who for many a year with rare exceptions had not only 'kept up his end' most stubbornly, but also made the highest scores on his side. Simon, like his namesake the 'cellerar,' had successfully stood the siege of all the 'Dame Marjories' he had encountered, and was now a portly (no pun) individual some five or six-and-forty years of age. We have his portrait now in batting costume, standing at the wicket, his bat protruding with a slope from his 'fair round belly' after the style of E. M. Grace, only more so. Uncharitable members of the 'single' persuasion were sometimes heard to hint that the gardeners knew better than to bowl Simon, because it made a difference to their comfort when waiting in the servants' hall for orders or other purposes, but then these cynics were only 'young sillies,' so nobody cared, and Simon still enjoyed his reputation as the 'Grace' of the Mallowdale 'single' at the epoch that forms the subject of my tale.

The family had been away at the seaside for three weeks, and, Simon's services not being required, he had been allowed a holiday to visit his friends, which time he had spent with some old cronies in a Yorkshire village, where he had been engaged previous to his advent at Mallowdale, but had returned in good time for the match, feeling, he declared, 'as fit as a fiddle.'

The eventful morning broke with every promise of a hot day; the early mist made but a short and faint resistance to the rays of the sun god, and the well-prepared wicket was pronounced by the cricketing conclave to be 'every inch a batsman's.' The 'coin' favoured the 'married,' and on such a wicket, of course, they commenced batting with their Hornby and Barlow, or the best imitation thereof they could produce.

Simon always stood at 'point,' the 'young sillies' said because he could field some of the cuts with his—well—his waistcoat; no, he didn't wear one, but you know what I mean. Harry Mansell, the 'Hornby' above alluded to, was great at a cut, carrying his propensity in this direction to a fault. He would cut off the middle, and even off the leg stump, frequently sending the ball into his 'off' timber, so, on such a wicket as we had that day, there was plenty of work for both 'the belly and the members,' the score rising with frightful rapidity, till the doughty Simon was fain to accede to the placing of an extra man at 'third man up,' whereby a good many 'twos' were reduced to singles, and at last a parting was effected by a lucky shot dismissing Mansell for a brilliant, if not faultless, seventy-two. His partner had meantime got into double figures, so, with extras, the score was uncomfortably near the century at fall of the first wicket. The new comer, however, sent his first ball straight into the pit of Simon's stomach, where the butler managed to secure it, and, this raising the spirits of the 'out' side, they dislodged the rest with greater rapidity, but not before one hundred and sixty was chalked up on the blackboard from the village school, which did duty for a telegraph.

'Now, Simon,' cried Tom Hurd the farmer, as he prepared to face the veteran at the wickets, 'you must pull yourself together, and don't get thinking about that Yorkshire girl you've been to see.'

'Oh, I never let women trouble me, Mr. Hurd; but mind you don't run me out. I can't get across like you with about half a dozen strides; it's all twenty-two yards when you get to my age, and I'm not exactly a stripling.'

The attack was commenced by Snell and Staines, and runs came very slowly for a time, Simon's tactics being always to 'get well set' before taking any liberties; at last he 'opened his shoulders' to a lengthy one coming straight for his pads, and away it went for four, the first sensational hit of the day.

Simon had now 'got his eye in,' and the applause of his partisans put him on his mettle. The concourse on the green had by this time swelled to a maximum, for the Mallowdale matrons and maidens, who had been delayed by domestic duties, now mustered in full strength, and the soul of the butler rose strong within him urging him to break his record and cover himself with undying fame on Mallowdale Green.

Whether the bowlers had a sneaking inclination to humour him, or whether they were somewhat demoralised, certain it is that the game henceforth became more of a spectator's match. 'Maidens' were conspicuous by their scarcity, and though Simon lost several partners, partly through his excessive caution in running, he did not lose his *head*, so, at the fall of the sixth wicket, the 'married' score was only ten above that of their opponents. At this point an adjournment took place for lunch, and the hero was overwhelmed with plaudits, especially from those wicked youths who had 'got a little on,' *sub rosa*, for the Squire disapproved of anything in the shape of betting among the parishioners, though he generally had 'business' in town about the time of the Derby, and had incurred considerable expense in renovating his stables just after his cousin Lord Fallowfield's colt carried off the 'blue ribbon.'

Confining himself to a modest bumper of claret, with whose antecedents he was well acquainted, Simon allowed neither the applause of his admirers nor the depth of his potations to make him 'turn a hair,' and, lunch over, he walked to the wickets with deliberation worthy of a judge returning to his seat on the bench.

Steadily the score rose during the next few overs, until, with an off drive from Simon's bat right into the marquee, the former total was passed amid ringing cheers, and cries of 'Go it, Simon! you'll carry your bat yet!'

Victory thus secured, the batsmen, of course, played with greater confidence, and sent the bowlers all over the green, the butler declaring he had never had such an innings in his life; but historian and novelist have vied with each other in depicting the mutability of mundane joys, and Simon was shortly destined to wish he had not soared so high to have so far to fall.

During a short delay, caused by a hurried consultation about a 'change,' a messenger ran across from the marquee with a note for 'Mr. Pawkins.' The perusal of this missive wrought a startling change in the demeanour of the imperturbable butler. His face grew as pale as lay within its power, and all the swellings of self-importance vanished as if by magic. Not the most captious of the 'young sillies' could any longer compare the object of their envy to a 'turkey-cock.' Dropping his bat in his abstraction, he stammered something about being 'wanted,' and wended his way to the marquee with something of the alacrity of a prisoner going to the treadmill, while all the field were lost in astonishment, and queries which none could answer were held all round as to 'what was in the wind now,' and so forth. Most of the men, however, discovered that they wanted a handkerchief or something which they had to fetch from the tent, and the remaining few went because the others had gone, so they were all pretty close on Pawkins' heels when he entered and found himself face to face with a lady of severe aspect who seemed no way disconcerted at the Mallowdale concourse, consisting though it did of so large a proportion of strangers of the male persuasion.

'*Good* morning, Mr. Pawkins, and *how* do you find yourself this morning, Mr. Pawkins? You really look as if the unexpected pleasure of my arrival was rather too much for your nerves.'

'My good soul, won't you come to the inn? You must be tired after your journey,' gasped the unfortunate cricketer.

'No; your "good soul" won't go to any inn, and she isn't at all fatigued, thank you; but she would like you, Simon Pawkins, to read this document if your education goes so far.'

'Oh, yes, it's all right; don't make a fuss about nothing,' pleaded the victim, pushing the paper away.

'Nothing! I dare say you wish it *was* nothing; but *I* wish all these good people to know that these are my marriage-lines, and I'm not ashamed of them; and I'm not going to be coaxed into a public-house where they can be taken from me. Good gracious! A man who denies his marriage a week after his wedding is capable of anything!'

'But I *haven't* denied anything,' remonstrated Simon, 'and nobody wants to take anything from you. Do calm yourself now.'

'Not denied it? What do you call this match? *I* know what I'm talking about; it's 'married against single,' and you're playing amongst the young single men. Oh! I little thought it would come to this'—sob—'last'—sob—'Wednesday, only a week ago'—sob—'to-day,' and here she fainted outright in the arms of the portly Simon, who was glad to hustle her out of the way to the Mallowdale Arms, where the landlady administered cognac in small quantities, while Pawkins was more liberal with the water, applying it indiscriminately to the lady's silk dress and its wearer. The former portion of the remedy seemed to be most effectual, for the pretender to the title of Mrs. Pawkins gradually recovered consciousness, and with it her tongue. Turning a reproachful gaze on Simon, she recapitulated her wrongs for the benefit of Mrs. Maltby, the landlady, and as many of the Maltby household as could get their heads in at the parlour door.

'Mr. Pawkins,' began Mrs. Maltby, gravely, 'what is it all about? Is this lady your wife?'

'Of course she is,' replied Simon in a dogged tone, for he was fast becoming exasperated; 'and mighty proud she seems of the honour, by the way she parades it before everybody.'

'Why didn't you tell us the news, Mr. Pawkins? We should all have been glad to wish you joy.'

'Well, I didn't just care to take all the badgering I should get after making a fool of myself, and so I meant to keep it quiet till after the match, and then leave the Hall as quietly as I could, and as soon as the Squire could get suited.'

'I don't think you've made a fool of yourself at all; take my advice, and don't heed the fellows' chaffing, they'll tire of it in a day or two; and you, Mrs. Pawkins, I own it was enough to take you aback to find your husband figuring as a single man, but don't make a fuss about little or nothing, we must give and take in married life.'

'A work spoken in season;' how good it always is. Simon survived the chaff, and is now the prosperous tenant of one of the Mallowdale farms, on which he had for years cast longing eyes. Here he lives happily with his wife, who turned out to be the housekeeper at the Yorkshire mansion in the neighbourhood of which Simon spent his three weeks. She came down unexpectedly on the match day to apprize her husband of a legacy which had fallen to her, and which would enable them to take to the said farm.

The ex-butler may still be seen at the annual match, but he acts as umpire, an office for the fulfilment of which, he laughingly remarks, 'It matters not whether a man be married or single.'

SPORTING MEMORIES.

By 'DOOKER.'

FEW events in a man's life stand out so clearly traced on the tablets of his memory as successful days in sport, that is, if he be a sportsman (not 'sporting man,' mind). Moreover, should he be fortunate enough to have preserved relics and trophies of those happy halcyon days, they will serve to recall all the more vividly the incidents connected therewith. 'Peregrine,' in one of his charming articles contributed lately to the *Field*, spoke, if I remember aright, with much humour of the 'sportsman' who does not sport, and, moreover, gave that individual much sound advice; but should he chance to read these lines I trust he will not lash me with the scathing sarcasm of his powerful pen, for, alas! I belong to that *genus* at present—involuntarily, it is true, but a fact nevertheless. Is it not Kingsley who tells us 'that every dog has his day?' Well, I have had mine, and must not grumble. A day, or days, of rare good fun too, of youth, health, and good fellowship; but on none of those days do I look back with so much fondness and affection as those spent with rifle and spear, rod and gun, booted and spurred.

As I sit penning these lines in my den in the 'braw' North, whilst the keen east wind whistles round the gables of the house, and the snow falls thick and fast, swirling and gathering in great wreaths under every dyke side, my eye rests on various trophies of the chase, and my mind goes back to many a lonely jungle and level plain in the sunny land of Ind, to many a duck and snipe haunted marsh, to many a 'hot corner,' heathery moorland, rocky Devonshire 'coombe,' whirling boulder-strewn stream, broad, stiffly-fenced acres of grass, and other places where once I pursued the sports in which my soul delighted.

I would give much if 'Peregrine' could now drop in and have a chat with me over a pipe, and, shall we say, just that thimbleful of 'Highland wine' and water he admits *is* occasionally allowable? Though I have not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, I am sure that that 'camaraderie' and freemasonry that exists amongst all true sportsmen would make us fast friends in ten minutes. 'Wild Boar Cleugh,' too, oh, 'Peregrine,' would be a magic password to our mutual introduction, for, above all other animals of *venerie*, I reverence the wild boar. Doubtless the wild boar who erstwhile inhabited your part of the country was even a more courageous and formidable antagonist than he of India, with whom I am intimately acquainted, and to whom I am indebted for the very best fun I ever had in my life. I wonder, too, if the ancient Britons were as keen in his pursuit over the wild moorlands and forests of those days as we were many years ago over the stony hills of the Deccan, and did those little curved pieces of ivory called tushes possess as much value in their eyes as in ours? Alas! I fear their soul thirsted more for swine-flesh than for the honour and glory of 'first spear.'

But here I am talking away to 'Peregrine' instead of getting 'forrard,' so I must put on the gag, take up a link in the curb chain of my pen Pegasus, and try and get that shifty quadruped to settle down into his stride, and not bolt out of the course, or else I shall be getting a double thonging from Mr. Fores, and hear the editorial voice sternly telling me 'to get away forrard! War' hangin' back, Dooker!'

No doubt we sportsmen may to a certain extent deserve the sarcastic remark levelled at us by our more gifted brethren of being '*mere sportsmen* and nothing more.' Still, I would urge in defence that this fact does not make us any the worse *men* from a moral point of view, and that, moreover, there have been, and still are, many eminent men who were, and are both true and keen sportsmen, and I venture to doubt if during any phase of their lives they enjoyed more real pleasure or experienced greater pride than in excelling in the sports of the field. Nay more, if even a victory won by arms, or in debate over their fellow-men, has been capable of producing in after years such a feeling of inate satisfaction as some trophy, or triumph gained in the pursuit of animals termed *feræ naturæ*. Does not a love of sport, by which I mean a genuine and chivalrous love of it that would scorn a mean advantage being taken by the pursuer over the pursued, eminently fit a man to fight the more serious battle of life, give him patience and perseverance, and endow him with a heart *robur et æs triplex*, before which troubles and

"As the stricken" brute charged home.

see page 107.

difficulties will eventually succumb and disappear like frost before the sun? Determination *will* win in the end, whether it be employed in the pursuit of success in life, or in the meaner object of stalking a wary cock grouse in December, and enables a man to face moral, as well as social and physical danger, with a clear brow and bold front.

Do not we all know the *gaudia certaminis* as the time approaches for us to match our human reasoning power and skill in the use of our weapon against the cunning or brute force of our quarry, and do we not sniff the battle from afar like any war-horse? I doubt whether even the warrior feels a keener excitement at the prospect of some coming strife than does the sportsman when he sallies forth in quest of some foe worthy of his steel. As poor Lindsay Gordon sings in one of those touching *Bush Ballads*,—

> 'The sweets of distinction are somewhat tame
> When no personal risks befall.'

'An we be' hunting men what has life to offer equal to the stride of a good horse, the music of eighteen couple of hounds in full cry, and a 'fast forty minutes o'er the vale?' or what can be more intensely exciting and exhilarating than waiting beneath a 'tope' of trees listening to the noise of the beaters as they approach nearer and nearer, and then at last to see the grim, grey boar slowly emerge from his home of 'rumnah' grass and thorny 'baubul,' take one look round, and then set off at a leisurely trot, to be shortly changed into a bounding gallop as we thunder after him, the while the fierce rays of an Eastern sun glint down on our bright steel spear-heads? Then the keen contest for first spear, the surly grunt of defiance, the headlong, vicious charge, and then, oh! then, that delicious sensation as the sharp blade of our spear is buried deep in the brawny back, and withdrawn with the crimson tell-tale stain that denotes the thrust has gone home, and that *we* have not come off second best in the encounter! If we be deerstalkers we find the essence of delight comprised in the rugged mountain, purple heather, gloomy corrie, and the wreathing mist that, as it rises like a curtain, reveals to us the 'royal,' with his brow, bay, and tray, with three on top, of whom we were in search, and our hearts beat faster, and our pulses throb as we note his massive outline and the grand sweep of his antlers, while we cogitate in our mind, and discuss with Archie or Donal the chances of 'getting in' without arousing the suspicions of yon sentinel hind.

So also to the angler, the most dulcet strains of Patti, or any other queen of song sound but as discordant notes compared to the click of the reel, and the swirl of a rushing stream, from out of whose depths yon bar of silver shoots upwards full forty yards distant from us; and then, when the struggle begins, what fears and doubts as to our tackle, or as to whether we are putting too much strain on the 'fish' assail our very hearts, until at last the noble, fresh-run twenty-pounder is deftly gaffed, and lies gasping on the shingle at our feet! Yes, it is the same with all sport, even to the humble one of rat-catching, and we vow at the moment nothing can equal the sport in which for the moment we are engaged, *provided* it terminates successfully, otherwise—— Well, we will not look on the darker side of the picture, nor remember the blank days with hounds, the long tramp after wild birds, the weary flogging of a stream from 'morn till dewy eve' with 'divil a rise, begorra!' Perhaps, though, it is as well that we *should* remember our failures as well as our successes, and that good fortune should at times be tempered with disappointment. *Toujours perdrix* is apt to pall, no less in sport than in others phases of life, and a man who knows not what it is to fail is inclined to get *blasé*, and not appreciate the plums in the pudding. But with all this I do not for a moment mean to uphold that sport and devotion to its charms should be the sole aim and object of a man's life. *Vade retro!* far be it from me; but I do affirm without hesitation that memories of days thus spent will afford to the lucky man in after life, when he is unable to participate in the darling sports of his youth, an indescribable pleasure. Yes, truly, *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit;* and surely there were never truer words penned than by him who was the Poet Laureate of Indian sports than the lines,—

'In sorrows mood, in solitude
Those dreams will haunt him yet.'

I am sure all sportsmen, and most readers of these lines, will agree with me in my remarks, and there can be but few to whom recollections of days of good sport do not afford a pleasant theme for reflection. If I should be deemed mistaken by any who do their duty, and regularly peruse their *Fores's*, well, let us agree to differ, and each 'gang his ain gait;' for there is great truth in the aphorism,—

'A man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still.'

As I write my eye rests on a bull bison's head, flanked on either side by a tiger skin nailed on the pitch-pine paneling of the walls of my sanctum. How the sight of those massive horns, striped hides, and wide, gaping jaws, bring back memories of the past, and carry one back to a certain tiger-haunted jungle in Berar! How one can almost feel the hot, dry, sultry air, and see the sandy nullah where we first saw the 'pug,' the sign manual of the mighty feline monarch of the jungle; how one remembers every detail and arrangement made for his destruction; how vividly the faces of the swarthy, scantily-clad forms of the beaters and shikaris rise up like wraiths through the mists of years! Then the anxious moment when we roused our game, the sharp crack of the rifle, the terror-striking, hoarse, coughing roar as the stricken brute charged home; and then the moment of supreme triumph when our foe lay gasping at our very feet almost, kicking in the last convulsions of death as his life's blood ebbed slowly out on the arid sand, and we and the friend who accompanied us exchanged, *more Britannico*, a grip of the hand, and poured forth mutual congratulations! Those cheetal horns, too, and that bison's head on the opposite wall, what visions they recall of steep mountain-side clothed in feathery bamboo, and dense forest! How clearly we can recall all the *minutiæ* of the anxious and stealthy stalk in the cool, early, morning air, that at length brought us within range of where our quarry was quietly nibbling the young, tender shoots of grass, and then the successful result. A grinning panther's skull (ridden and speared) reminds us of our last day's shikar in the gorgeous East, as well as of the narrowest squeak for life we ever had through the rash impetuosity of youth, and which might have resulted in the writer sharing the fate of the luckless wight to whose rescue he went. Foxes' masks and brushes recall pleasant days with horse and hound, over the spreading pastures and stiff fences of the Blackmoor Vale, and over the dry chalk hills of the Cattistock country, whilst yonder bent and battered hunting-horn brings the unbidden tear to the eye in memory of one of the cheeriest friends and best of sportsmen who ever bestrode a horse or cheered a hound. Ah, me! how time flies! thrice have the cubs been routed out, and their sires and dams hunted, since he died, literally in harness, for he was killed when hunting his own hounds. We all said, on the day the whole hunt escorted his body to its last resting-place, 'We shall ne'er see his like again!'—and *felt*, moreover, what we said. That round ebony tablet, on which are fixed bullets cut out of tiger, bear, and bison, could speak volumes were they but endowed with the gift of speech, for each bullet has its tale to tell, and brings to mind, with a breath of the forest, scenes in which they were important actors. A badger's head, some antelope, ravine deer, and muntjâk heads and horns, all add their quota to the tale of the past; and last, but not least, those two hog spears standing sentinel on each side of the doorway, their bright steel heads glistening in the firelight, and that pair of *nine and a quarter inch* boar's tushes (most highly-prized relic of all), speak more eloquently than can any words. Yes, though nearly two decades have passed since they were won, how fresh is the recollection of the day. The long blank beat, the find at last, as the huge form reared itself out of a line of scattered bushes, the race for the spear with dear old friends—(some, alas! gone to the happy hunting-grounds), one of whom, we believe, has never *quite* forgiven us even to this day for beating him and gaining the coveted prize—the miserable feeling of disappointment as our horse blundered on to his head, and we thought we were out of the hunt, the keen, maddening excitement as we once more got on level terms, the scramble up the steep, rock-strewn Deccan hill, the game old Arab reeling from exhaustion, but doing his best for his master, and straining every nerve and muscle to win for him the honour of 'first spear,' the lunge forward, the purple stain on the spear-head as it is withdrawn, and the boar disappears in the dense brushwood; the momentary disappointment at losing sight of him, and then—then, the delight and elation as, shortly after, the 'thirty-four incher' is lugged out stiff and stark! Ah, yes! it *was* worth living for. But is not this and many other days of pleasant sport recorded in *Shikar Sketches*,* as well as in the pages of *Maga*, and the various incidents illustrated by those who possess in a greater degree the pencil of a Xeuxes than the writer inherits the legacy of Cadmus?

Repetition is wearisome, so I will refer no more to personal experiences, or, may be, I shall draw down on my head a well-merited rebuke for egotism. For a sportsman however, all relics of the chase possess a certain amount of interest, and if they have been won by his own individual exertion and prowess they have a double charm, and, in his sight, are 'more precious than rubies.' They may consist merely of some of those little red-backed hound lists, which he will turn over with affection,

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* *Shikar Sketches*, with Notes on Indian Field Sports. Hurst and Blackett, Great Marlborough Street, London.

"Straining every nerve and muscle
to win for him the honour of first spear."

see page 108.

remembering how each hound was bred, and its individual performances in the field. They may be diaries, recording many blank days, and some red-letter ones; or maps showing his route on some shikar expedition, with the various camping-grounds marked out, and a cross denoting the spot which has produced a tiger, bear, panther, &c. Nay, even such a trivial object as yon bundle of feathers (for cleaning out one's pipe) will recall that successful right and left made the other day at a couple of wild ducks as they rose from a frost-fringed stream with a loud quack of alarm, and produce a feeling of calm satisfaction.

'Gaudeamus, igitur,
Juvenes dum sumus.'

We remember many years ago asking the old huntsman of a West country pack of harriers, and a great character in his way (more by way of chaffing him than anything else), if he were related to a lady who had acquired a certain degree of notoriety in the Divorce Court. His reply, given after much deliberation, rather staggered us at the time, and we could not trace the connexion; but all the same it has ever remained impressed on our memory. It was as follows:—

'Well, no, sir. Not 'xactly a relation, but 'tis the *same blood in us—sportin', sportin', sportin' for ever!*'

We can only trust that our descendants may have 'sportin' blood' in their veins (though not exactly of the description alluded to by the old man). It can do them no harm, possibly much good, and furnish them with pleasant memories, which no man can rob them of, on which to dwell when past the prime of manhood, and which will only end with life.

So *vive le sport!* as our Gallic neighbours would say.

THE SQUIRES OF HOLYWELL AND HOLMEWOOD.

In Memoriam.

By CUTHBERT BEDE, Author of *Verdant Green.*

WITHIN a month after the publication of the April number of this magazine, two friends, who were well known to the public, have 'joined the great majority,' to use the phrase of that master of English oratory, John Bright, who only preceded them by a brief time.

The two friends, who had much in common, and whose country seats were, as the crow flies, less than twenty-two miles apart, were Mr. Charles Birch-Reynardson, of Holywell, South Lincolnshire, and Mr. William Wells, of Holmewood, Huntingdonshire. Mr. Wells died at his town-house, No. 12 North Audley Street, on the evening of that May day on which Mr. Birch-Reynardson was buried in the family-vault in the little church, with its ancient ivy-mantled tower, that is so picturesquely situated on the lawn of Holywell Hall, close beside the largest of the ornamental sheets of water. His grandson, the Earl of Hopetoun, was among those who attended the funeral. It took place within a mile of the Great Northern Railway, along which I was that day travelling on my return home after more than a three months' absence at Ventnor and Hastings, in vain quest of health. It was a lovely day of spring's beauty; but, as the express whirled us past Holmewood, bathed in sunshine, I little thought of the dark cloud that was then on its way from North Audley Street. As I had intimately known Mr. Wells for thirty-nine years, and Mr. Birch-Reynardson for nineteen years, and as, in many ways, they were representative men of those varied sports that find their chronicled embodiment in the pages of this magazine, its proprietor has desired me here to place on record some slight notice of their several careers.

Charles Thomas Samuel Birch-Reynardson, J.P. and D.L., who died at Holywell Hall, April 26th, aged seventy-eight, was the eldest son of General Thomas Birch, who married Ethelred, eldest daughter of Jacob Reynardson, of Holywell, and, at the death of his father-in-law, assumed his surname and arms. Another son was General Edward Birch-Reynardson, who, as Colonel, commanded the Grenadier Guards at the Battle of Inkerman. A third son is the Rev. John Birch-Reynardson, Rector of Careby-with-Holywell. The squire was born November 10th, 1810, at Colchester, where his father was then quartered with his regiment, the 16th Light Dragoons, now 16th Lancers. He was educated at the Charterhouse and Eton, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and took up his residence at Holywell on his father's death, in 1854. He was twice married, and had three daughters, the eldest of whom married the late Earl of Hopetoun, and one son, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Birch-Reynardson, of the Grenadier Guards, who now succeeds his father at Holywell.

The Hall stands in a romantic, sequestered position, environed with steep hills and much ornamental water. The gardens are extensive, and the park, though small, is picturesque and surrounded by woods. It is a favourite meet of the Cottesmore Hounds, where they can depend on finding a fox; and although the Squire was unable to ride to hounds, on account of the serious accident to his hip in early life, which greatly crippled him for the rest of his days, yet he was a staunch upholder of the chase, and a fox-preserver, although shooting (from his specially constructed cart) was the only field sport in which he was able to indulge. Under the title 'A Popular Fixture with the Cottesmore,' one of the artists of this magazine, Cuthbert Bradley (my eldest son) had a page of sketches in *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, March 17th, 1883, with letterpress descriptive of a lawn-meet at Holywell Hall. The sketches showed Will Neal and Jim Goddard riding through the park with the hounds beside the pretty stream that feeds the pools; the carriages and visitors coming down the hill by the winding drive; the lawn-meet; mounting the hunter from the covert-hack, without putting foot to the ground; and the Master putting the hounds into covert. On these occasions the squire gave a hearty welcome to all, though unable to join them on horseback.

In his volume, *Sports and Anecdotes of Bygone Days* (Chapman and Hall, 1887), which has passed into a second edition, the Squire, referring to his hip accident, at the age of nineteen, says, 'Till then I was in possession of as good a pair of legs as other people, and, as a Yankee would say, "I guess I could swim as far, dive as deep, and come up as dry as any other fellow." As soon as I was old enough to attempt any kind of equitation I was put upon a rocking-horse; from that wooden affair I was put upon a donkey, who used to make a point of kicking me off three or four times a-day; I was then promoted to a pony with merely a sheepskin and a surcingle around it; then to a saddle and stirrups; and, ultimately, to one of my father's hunters, with white cord breeches, top-boots, and a swallow-tailed red coat. My father kept a good stud of light-weight horses, encouraged my riding in every way, and never was better pleased than to see me going well. I was generally well mounted, as light as sixpennyworth of halfpence, certainly not much heavier than a good fat Norfolk cock turkey. My motto was *Gaudet equis canibusque.* My heart was in the right place, and I could generally hold my own across country with the best of 'em. I was taught to consider hunting a noble science, and to this day, though debarred by my accident from joining in the chase, I still love the sight of a red coat, the sound of the hounds and the horn, and I am not a little proud to think that I can show as many foxes as any man.' Six chapters of the volume are very agreeably taken up with the Squire's personal reminiscences of the chase, illustrated with coloured lithographs from original paintings at Holywell.

The same volume also shows that, in the sports of shooting and fishing, he was an enthusiastic and skilled expert, not only in England, but also in Ireland, Scotland, Germany, and Italy. The double-handed punt, with its formidable piece of 'wild fowl artillery,' to carry sixteen ounces of shot, with three ounces of powder behind it, which, after considerable difficulty, was only passed by the Piedmontese Custom House authorities as '*pistoni di caccia*, or a piston of the chase,' was preserved at Holywell among the curiosities of the past. He had a steam yacht, and, in the latter part of his life, usually passed the summer on the Western Highland coast, with Oban for his head-quarters.

One little anecdote is not recorded in his amusing volume. On the ornamental waters at Holywell were numerous swans, of whom the Squire was very fond, and whose graceful beauty added to the charms of the scenery. But one of them was very troublesome in persisting on trespassing at a corner of the pool where the owner did not want him, so the Squire thought he would send a shot so near as to frighten him from repeating his trespass. This plan he carried into execution; but, unfortunately, at the moment of the discharge, the swan suddenly raised his head, on which the shot took fatal effect. I chanced to call upon the Squire a few minutes after this disaster, and found him 'not happy.'

But perhaps his very greatest pleasure in the way of 'sport' was as a gentleman coachman, to drive a real mail or genuine passenger four-wheeler of the olden time, by night and by day, in summer and winter, tempest and snowstorm, as though he was earning his livelihood by the work. In his well-known and popular volume, *Down the Road*, he tells his readers how, as a boy, he horrified his father, at Holywell, by his first attempt at driving two donkeys, tandem, harnessed to a nondescript vehicle, and how 'the leader persisted in turning round and looking me full in the face, and seemed to threaten to sit beside me.' His first instructor in the art was old John Barker, driver of the 'Regent' Coach, from the 'George Hotel,' Stamford, to Huntingdon, in 1823, when the future squire was a little lad on his way to and from school at the Charterhouse. Another of his instructors was Tom Hennesy, coachman to the 'Regent' between Huntingdon and London. Others were Dick Vickers of the Shrewsbury Mail, Sam Hayward of the Shifnall Coach, Charlie Harper of the Chester Mail, Peter Hilton of the 'Hirondelle,' Jack Williams, Harry Vyse, Will Jones, Shaw of the 'Nettle,' and many more. Mr. Birch-Reynardson had permission from the proprietors to drive the mail from Shrewsbury to Holyhead whenever he pleased. It was one of the fastest in the country, being rated by the Post Office to do rather more than ten and a half miles an hour, including stoppages, and the 'gentleman coachman' considers that he often did the distance at eleven miles an hour including stoppages.

The Squire of Holywell had amused himself at intervals by writing down certain anecdotes and reminiscences of his coaching career; and, as my home, for fourteen years, was at Stretton Rectory, on the Great North Road, only three miles from Holywell, he frequently drove over to call, and would read one of his manuscripts. I may here say that he was a most admirable reader, with a fine, clear voice, an acute sense of humour, and an adept at bringing out the best points of his story. He would have been most popular at entertainments, and when I have read, in public, some portions of his writings, I have secretly wished, for the sake of my audience, that I could have recited them with their author's ability. As the months and years went on the manuscript reminiscences increased, until at length, and not without much difficulty, the Squire permitted me to take charge of them, and see if I could find any one who 'would be fool enough to risk his money by publishing them.' I sent them to the late Mr. William Longman, who at once accepted them, and arranged with me as to the details of publication. I suggested the illustrations, and also the title, *Down the Road*, which was in place of a much longer one submitted by the author. Besides the collection of whips—including Tom Hennesy's crooked whip—that were hung in the Squire's favourite sitting-room (in another room was as large a collection of walking-sticks, alpenstocks, &c.), the walls were thickly covered with admirable oil-paintings of coaching incidents by Henry Alken. The only difficulty was to select eleven representative scenes from such a goodly number; but this was at last accomplished by the Squire and myself; and, excellently lithographed in colours by Messrs. Hanhart, they formed a most attractive portion of the volume. I saw it through the press, and it appeared, sumptuously produced, and bound in scarlet and gold. The Squire of Holywell was not only launched upon the world in the new character of an author, but he 'awoke to find himself famous,' for the volume at once achieved a success that it richly deserved, and the critics, from the mighty *Quarterly* downwards, were unanimous in its praise. It achieved the honours of a second edition, and was afterwards followed by the volume, *Sports and Anecdotes of Bygone Days*, much of which I had also seen in manuscript, though I did not assist in its publication. He was a musician of much ability, and, in connexion with his *Down the Road*, published (through Ollivier, London) *The Old Mail-horn Galop; by a Worn-out Coachman.* His portrait is introduced in the large engraving published by Messrs. Dickinson and Foster, *A Meet of the Four-in-Hand Club at the Magazine in Hyde Park.* Mr. Birch-Reynardson is depicted on foot; his son and daughter-in-law are on Lord Hothfield's coach.

In here parting from him I may say of his *Down the Road* that it was a happy thought that led him to chronicle those scenes of a vanished past, and to place upon record the actual experience of a gentleman coachman, who, as he said, had 'really worked a coach by night and by day, through wind and rain, frost and snow, in rough and smooth.' The volume may be said to possess a historical value, as being the faithful reflex of a system of things that have now had their day, but have not lost their interest for the present generation; and readers of Mr. Birch-Reynardson's *Down the Road* will thank the Squire of Holywell for preserving from oblivion such truthful, genial, and anecdotal reminiscences of days when the sound of the old mail-horn made pleasant music for many a listening ear.

About twenty-two miles south of Holywell, on the same side of the Great North Road, and a mile south of the once famous coaching and posting town of Stilton, is the pretty lodge that leads, over the steep hill, and by a two-mile drive through the finely timbered park, to Holmewood, until May-day last the country residence of Mr. William Wells, J.P. and D.L. for Kent and Hunts, J.P. for Peterborough, High Sheriff for Hunts in

1875, and M.P. for Beverly for five years, and for Peterborough for six years. He was the elder son of Captain William Wells, R.N., who married (1816) Elizabeth, youngest daughter of the first Earl of Carysfort, and died in 1826, when his elder son was only eight years of age. William Wells went to Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, where he took his B.A. degree in 1839. Among his intimate friends at Oxford was Lord Elcho of Christ Church, who was afterwards his brother-in-law, and whom he greatly helped in the early days of the Volunteer movement. Mr. Wells married, in 1854, the Lady Louisa Charteris, younger daughter of the eighth Earl of Wemyss and March. She survives her husband, and, as there are no children, the Holmewood estates pass to a nephew, Mr. Hubert Wells, son of Captain Granville-Granville Wells, who married a daughter of Lord Hylton.

The Squire of Holmewood was formerly a captain in the First Life Guards, and had a hunting establishment at Melton, where he was well-known with the Pytchley, Quorn, and Belvoir Hounds. He was a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and his schooner *Destiny*, 130 tons, won the Prince of Wales' Cup at Cowes. He was one of the oldest members of the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society, on which he served for twenty-three years, and was elected President in 1880. After being a member of the Chemical Committee of the same society for four years, he was chosen chairman in 1866, and held that post to the end of his life, where he was of great service to the country in suppressing the sale of adulterated manures, seeds, and feeding stuffs, and his advice was always invaluable to the committee.

He succeeded the late Lord de Ramsey—side by side with whom he had fought and won the Battle of the Levels—as Chairman of the Middle Level Commissioners. I had to take part in that contest, as I possessed two votes for my parishes of Denton and Caldecote, which ran down to Whittlesea Mere. He was Governor of the Huntingdonshire County Hospital, built in 1852. I went round the parish of Holme, soliciting donations for the hospital; and he was much amused at the small shopkeeper who, in reply to my request, said, 'I likes to be pop'lar, so I'll put down half-a-crown!' He was a very active member of the Council of the National Rifle Association, president of the Holme Constitutional Association, alderman of the Hunts County Council, vice-president of the Peterborough

Infirmary, and a strenuous supporter of the Peterborough Agricultural Society. As a practical agriculturalist his name will always be associated with the enormous work that he undertook, and successfully carried to completion, in the drainage and reclamation of Whittlesea Mere—miscalled 'Whittlesea,' for it had nothing to do with that town, but was almost entirely in the parish of Holme. He was indefatigable in his numerous public duties; and, when the Chambers of Commerce were started, he was at their head in Huntingdonshire, where I was a member, and advocated them with my pen. The last time that we served together on any public function was as fellow-committeemen on the Tercentenary Exhibition of Mary Queen of Scots' Relics, at Peterborough, in 1887. In all the local agricultural shows Mr. Wells, as a matter of course, from his experience, courtesy, and ability, was looked upon to take a leading part; and he never shrank from faithfully fulfilling his duties even when he might have pleaded ill-health to be released from their burden. His respected and useful life was brought to a close on May 1st, at his town-house, 12 North Audley Street.

The funeral took place at Holme on the following Monday, May 6th, a day of cloudless sky and brilliant weather. It was quite a representative funeral, and was very largely attended. Among those who stood around the grave—which was in the new portion of the churchyard, by the side of the graves of his mother and of Sir Henry Carstairs Pelly, M.P., who had married a daughter of Lord Elcho, and died in 1877—were the Earls of Wemyss and Carysfort; Lords Elcho, Brooke, de Ramsey, Hylton, Anson, Esme Gordon, and de Vesci; Hons. A. Charteris, A. L. Greville, St. John Brodrick, T. W. Fitzwilliam, and A. E. Fellowes; Colonels Strong and Duncombe; Captain G. G. Wells; Dr. Voelcker; and Messrs. Heathcote, Gurdon, Bowyer, Rust, Tillard, Dent-Dent, Wilson, Clark, Gates, &c. Besides tenants and those who were more immediately connected with the estate and household, were deputations from the Royal and Peterborough Agricultural Societies, Middle Level Board and Commissioners, Eau Brink and Ouse Outfall Commissioners, the National Rifle Association, Hunts County Council and County Magistrates, Peterborough Freemasons, &c. As a landlord, Mr. Wells was most kind and generous in meeting the wishes and wants of his tenants, even to expensive claying of their land; and the village of Holme may be said to have been nearly rebuilt by him, including new schools and master's house, new vicarage, and the restoration of the ancient church.

I first became acquainted with Mr. Wells in the year 1850, when I was ordained to the curacy of Glatton-with-Holme, now two distinct parishes. At that date a stranger who walked through Holme might wonder at seeing, in a small inland village, three public-houses bearing the signboards of 'The Ship,' 'The Man of War,' and 'The Admiral.' But they were so named in compliment to Mr. Wells' grandfather, Vice-Admiral Thomas Wells, one of the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, who died at Holmewood, Oct. 31st, 1811, aged 51, and to whose memory there is a handsome marble tablet in the chancel of Holme Church. Admiral Wells was Lord of the Manor of the adjacent parish, Glatton; and his father, who was a shipbuilder at Chatham, when he built an Indiaman of 1256 tons, 56 guns, named it *The Glatton*, after that portion of his Huntingdonshire property. Sir Edward Vernon sailed with *The Glatton* to India, and it is mentioned in his dispatches, under date Aug. 16th, 1778. It was purchased by the British Government in 1795, and commissioned by Captain (afterwards Sir Henry) Trollope, at whose suggestion twenty-eight 68-pounder carronades were added to the lower deck. Under Captain Trollope's command, *The Glatton* fought a very gallant action alone, against a squadron of six French frigates, on July 15th, 1796. The French vessels—one of which was from three to four hundred tons larger than the English ship—being worsted, after a fierce engagement, bore away to Flushing, hotly pursued by *The Glatton*. One of the French frigates was sunk, and the other five, having lost heavily, declined to renew the fight. *The Glatton* had none killed, and only two wounded.

In memory of this exploit, the Admiralty have continued the name in the Royal Navy. The first of these to be so named was one of those iron-clad floating batteries that were launched from Green's Yard, Blackwall, during the Russian War, in the early part of 1855. *The Glatton* was decidedly not a thing of beauty; and, soon after its launch, when it was lying in Portsmouth Harbour, I chanced to engage a boatman to pull me up to the Royal yacht, *Victoria and Albert*, for which I had a ticket of admission. As we passed the ugly, novel ironclad, I asked my boatman what it was, and, when he told me that it was the new *Glatton*, I told him that it was so called from a Huntingdonshire village, and that I happened to be the Curate of Glatton. But the boatman thought that I was practising on his credulity, and ironically requested me to keep my story for the Marines.

I could not have been appointed to the curacy of Glatton-with-Holme at a more interesting time. Though everything was in readiness for the drainage, yet Whittlesea Mere was then intact, and I was in time to see it in its original condition, subject to tidal influence, and, probably, not very much altered from its state in those far-away days, when King Canute and his sons were nearly shipwrecked by a sudden storm that overtook the vessel in which they were sailing over the Mere. Its waters covered an area of 1570 acres, its dimensions were about four by two-and-a-half miles, and its circumference about eight miles and three-quarters. It was girdled by a wide belt of tall reed, called the 'reed-shore,' which, together with the outer quaking bog, made upwards of three thousand acres that had to be thoroughly drained before Mr. Wells could obtain any results for his expensive undertaking. Whittlesea Mere was the largest lake in England south of Windermere, and, as I have said, was in the parish of Holme. My daily duties were in that parish, which extended to the far side of the Mere, to the houses near Story's Bridge; therefore I soon became intimately acquainted with that most interesting district, so dear to wild-fowl shooters, anglers, boating men, and skaters. No doubt its obliteration from the map of England caused dismay, if not discontent, among the many thousands who had annually gone there, whether from the University of Cambridge or elsewhere, in search of their particular sport—which included the botanist's quest for *Arundo phragmites*, *Nymphæa alba*, *Nuphar luteum*, and *Osmunda regalis;* or the butterfly collectors (including numerous gipsies) who captured purple emperors, swallow-tails, and copper butterflies; and the fowlers who were after the wild-ducks, bitterns ('butter-bumps' the natives termed them), great greyshrikes ('butcher birds'), crested grebes, didappers, brown buzzards, bearded titmouse, ash-coloured falcon, ruffs and rheas, forked-tail kites, and other birds that obtained their food from marshy ground and swamps, and many of which found their last English breeding-place by the reed-shore of Whittlesea Mere. But, if Mr. Mechi's proud and patriotic boast was that he had made two blades of grass to grow where only one had grown before, what valid objection could be taken to the scientific agriculturist who, with wealth and confidence to carry out his experiments, could make corn to grow where tidal waters had flowed.

The exhibition of Appold's Centrifugal Pump, which, with its ceaseless cascade of 1652 gallons per minute, was one of the most popular features in the machinery department of the original Crystal Palace, determined Mr. Wells to adopt the new invention for the purposes of his extensive drainage; and an engine-house was constructed for its reception on the far side of the Mere. On November 10th, 1850, the waters of the Mere were let off into the 'rivers,' and in a few days the greater portion of the Mere was a vast mud-bed. The engine drain was then cut, from near the end of Holme Lode to Sword's Point, where the engine-house was erected, close to one of the main 'rivers'—the 'new cut' of the Bedford Level, which was wide and deep enough for barges. It would occupy far too much space to dwell here upon details, though all the very interesting steps of the proceedings, from their inception to their completion, were witnessed by me, and were recorded, for the public benefit, by my pen and pencil in the pages of *The Illustrated London News* (April 26th, 1851, and afterwards), and also by a series of water-colour drawings that I made on the spot, and presented to Mr. Wells in an album, which is to be handed down as a family heirloom, inasmuch as therein are represented scenes of the past, never to be recalled, and in such strong contrast with those of the present day. At the luncheon given by Mr. Wells, in the engine-house, to celebrate the partial completion of the work (see my sketch in *The Illustrated News*, Nov. 22nd, 1851), was the following happy quotation from Byron among the appropriate inscriptions on the walls,—

> 'We see, we recognise, and almost deem
> The present dubious, or the past a dream.'

Mr. Well's father was able to walk a few yards down the lawn in front of Holmewood, and there step into his yacht and sail straight away for the Mere. When I first knew it, in 1850, the garden portion of the waterway had been filled up as far as the other side of the carriage-road that bounded the garden. But it began there with a broad river or 'lode,' by the side of which were two stacks of reed that were valued at 1300*l.* This formed the subject of one of my sketches in the illustrated paper; but the printer, in place of 'Lode,' printed 'Lodge.' Very curiously, Mr. Wells built a lodge at that very spot after all that portion of the lode, to the other side of the railway, had been filled in.

The best memorial of the olden state of Whittlesea Mere is to be found in a volume, *Fen and Mere*, by Mr. Wells' near neighbour and friend, Mr. John Moyer Heathcote, of Conington Castle, published by Longmans in 1876 and profusely illustrated by autotypes from the author's powerful and faithful water-colour drawings, with the addition of old maps, and autotypes from the oil painting (at Conington) 'Deserted Mill in Winter,' by E. W. Cooke, R.A. (exhibited in the Royal Academy), and another from De Wint's water colour, 'Whittlesea Mere, from the Round Hill, in 1829,' which includes a view of Glatton. Mr. Heathcote's vigorous pencil had, happily preserved such characteristic scenes of the popular days of the Mere as are denoted in the following, from his numerous subjects:—'Regatta on Whittlesea Mere, 1842,' 'Skating on Whittlesea Mere, 1835,' 'Skaters and Sledges,' 'Groups on the Ice,' 'Old Woman selling hot chestnuts on the Ice,' 'Race on the Mere,' 'Skaters on Fen Drain,' 'Boat-gate of the Mere and the *Bure*' (which was a cutter used for pleasure parties), 'Cutting Reed,' 'Reed Harvest,' 'Stalking Sledge,' 'Landing Turf,' &c. As *Fen and Mere* was an expensive volume, and is now out of print, I might recommend to those who are not able to consult it, the *Leisure Hour* for May 1877, where will be found two chapters from my pen, specially written to explain the several illustrations selected from Mr. Heathcote's volume, and admirably placed on the wood by Percival Skelton. In the same volume of the *Leisure Hour* (page 745) will also be found a short story from my pen, 'The Ghost of the Mere,' in which the famous duck decoys, and other olden characteristics of the Mere, are introduced, Hale and hearty, at the advanced age of eighty-nine, Mr. Heathcote was able to attend the funeral of Mr. Wells, with whose family his own had become connected, through the marriage of his niece to the present Earl of Carysfort.

I remained as Curate of Glatton-with-Holme for four and a half years; and, in 1859, resigned the Vicarage of Bobbington, Staffordshire, on being presented (by Mr. Wells) to the Rectory of Denton-with-Caldecote, two parishes adjoining Glatton and Holme, where I lived for twelve years. I was thus able to witness the further reclamation of the drained area, from its first quaking state, when it could only be trodden by men wearing long boards strapped beneath their fen-boots. I had to walk with such boards; but one day, being without them, and trusting too confidently to the bramble-and-reed path, I suddenly sank in black, tenacious mud, from which I was powerless to extricate myself. Fortunately, help was at hand, and I escaped the fate of the Holme schoolboy, who, on a Sunday afternoon in

February 1851, sank to his armpits in the mud, and was not discovered until the following morning, when he had passed nineteen hours in his terrible position. He was alive, and soon recovered to tell me his story, which I have retold in one of the Christmas numbers of the *Boys' Own Paper.* Mr. Wells was always as thoughtfully kind to the poor and their children as was his mother, who was truly a 'Lady Bountiful;' and, to help the children who lived at a distance down the Mere, and would have had to trudge to and from school on newly-formed roads, he placed at their disposal 'The School Van,' which carried them in comfort.

I saw 'the Mere'—for it is still so-called—when only breast-ploughs could be used on its soft surface; and I witnessed the interesting experiment of 'claying' the Mere, when Mr. Wells laid down rails, and carried tons of soil out of his park, and distributed it over the reclaimed land. The scenery of the park, as viewed from the house, was greatly improved by this transference of earth. The house itself, too, was almost completely rebuilt, on a much enlarged scale, by Mr. Wells, his architect being Mr. William Young, then coming to the front with his work for Lord Elcho, and with his Queen Anne buildings on Lord Cadogan's estate at Chelsea, and soon to become well known as the selected architect for the new University buildings at Glasgow. Holmewood is rich in works of art, books and pictures; for, in addition to those already possessed by the family, Mr. Wells succeeded to the property of his uncle, Mr. William Wells, of Redleaf, Kent, with its famous collection of paintings and water colours by all the most eminent modern artists, more than one of whom were greatly indebted to the fine taste of the owner of Redleaf for their first introduction to the public.

Sir Edwin Landseer might be included in this statement, and it led to his great personal intimacy with the Squire of Holmewood, with whom he shot for many seasons in the famous Mar Forest, which they jointly rented from the Earl of Fife. Mr. Wells—who afterwards rented Inchrorry Forest, Banffshire—possessed many sketch-books of Sir Edwin, the pencil designs—of all sorts and conditions of men, as well as of beasts—having been made in railway carriages, on board steamers, or out in the forest. Mr. Wells told me that, after a hard day's deer-stalking, the great animal painter was never satisfied until he had the trophies of the day's sport brought to the door, when he set to work to sketch the dead deer, as though they were the first specimens on which he had ever tried his hand. The chief staircase at Holmewood was planned by the architect specially to display to proper advantage the large coloured cartoon by Sir Edwin, representing a group of stags (larger than life) at Mar Forest, with some figures—one of which is a portrait of Mr. Wells—in the mid-distance of the mountainous landscape. This splendid work of art is well seen from the hall, staircase, and upper corridor, the light having been arranged to show its beauties, when the protecting curtain is withdrawn. I believe that Sir Edwin only produced two other designs in coloured chalks. To give anything like a list of the works of art at Holmewood would occupy too much space, but I may mention the excellent effect of the crimson paper, largely covered by splendid water colours, in the room known as 'Lady Warwick's Bedroom,' the Countess of Warwick being a sister to Lady Louisa Wells.

I have many portraits of the Squire of Holmewood, of which I think the best is one that hangs framed in my drawing-room, issued with the *County Gentleman*, July 9, 1881. Close beside it hangs the private engraving, given to me by Mr. Wells, from Sir Francis Grant's portrait of Lady Elizabeth Wells. If any of my readers possess a copy, they may be glad to know that the miniature worn as a brooch by Lady Elizabeth was painted by her sister, Lady Charlotte Proby, and was a likeness of the future Squire of Holmewood when a little boy.

HOW WE QUALIFIED FOR THE FOUR-IN-HAND CLUB.

By 'A ROADSTER.'

DRIVE four-in-hand, indeed!' said contemptuously our wealthy uncle, the mill-owner, to whose enormous fortune Dick, Toby, and myself, the three prodigal sons of his prodigal brother, long since dead, were heirs. 'I never heard of such a thing. You'll just follow in the footsteps of your father, who, with all his brains, was never worth more than a single thousand pounds in his life. I mean pounds that he made himself, for he just drew out of the mill. Indeed, it was a case of *draw*, *draw*, *draw*, and *drive*, *drive*, *drive*. We let him do so, mind, simply because he would have ruined the whole concern in a week if we had allowed him to get his foot into the counting-house; 'gone a gamble in cotton' as he called it, and come a cropper in the Bankruptcy Court, for certain. We were too slow, he said, far too slow. But he could drive a coach, I must say *that*, for he learned it from old Tam Peach, who drove between Lancaster and London. These were *the* days of coaching and coachmen, and the thing was right enough. No, no,' he continued; 'so long as I am your trustee you will not have a single penny from me to spend in driving. You may take yourself off to the country if you like, and fish and shoot as much as you please, but not so much money as would weigh down a horse-nail will you spend in the way you have been indicating.'

'But, Uncle Simon,' said Dick, 'we only want it for the summer season; the rules of the Road Club make it imperative that we should drive a coach for three months. Now we can hire a drag and go down to the Highlands of Scotland, where we can do our reading and enjoy ourselves thoroughly.'

'Oh, indeed! Master Dick,' said the old man, 'a lot of reading *you* will do when you have got some horses in your neighbourhood. You can have as much as you like for shooting or fishing, or boating, but I'll have none of your driving. I draw the line at driving.'

'But the Club has been instituted to revive what are called the ancient glories of the road, and conserve an institution dear to old travellers like yourself,' said Toby.

'Confound the ancient glories, Tobias, my boy. Would you ask our firm, your grandfather's firm, to revive the ancient glories of the hand-loom. No! no! Whenever an institution gets superseded let it go. Any tendency to keep it alive keeps the world revolving more slowly than it should, and I don't believe in retrograde movements. Why not go back to the sedan chair, eh? Why not abolish guns, and take up bows and arrows? *No! no!* Go with the age, just as we have always done with the mill. If any new improvement cropped up, depend upon it Spools Brothers were the first to have it. Now if you could learn to drive an engine I could see some good in *that*, but as to your glories of the road, fiddlesticks! It was very well in nice summer weather I admit, but against an east wind in March, or in a downpour of rain, or a hailstorm, or stuck in the snow for thirty-six hours, or having to dismount up to the waist in the middle of a ford to give the wheels a turn, it was devilish uncomfortable. Such experiences you call glories of the road.

Bah! don't tell me! No! no! Get to the Highlands, Perthshire, or wherever it is, and *read*. Youth is the time for improvement, as we used to write in our copy-books.'

'That was all very well in your old-fashioned days, but they have changed the head-line now, uncle,' said Dick, who was a little nettled at the old gentleman's style of talking.

'What do they write it now, then?'

'Youth is the time for enjoyment,' said the imperturbable Dick.

'Your father all over again,' said Uncle Simon; 'but look here, boys, I'll be liberal. You'll have the best coach' (we were overjoyed at this promise too soon), 'you will have the best coach that's to be got in Oxford, but none of your four-wheelers. No. You will have one of those old coaches on legs, with two pairs of spectacles on his nose, and you'll go down to the Highlands at once, where you will have money for anything you want, a grouse moor or a salmon fishing, or both, but you won't spend a penny on wheels or horses.'

* * * * *

'He is a regular old cotton-twister, and no mistake,' said Dick, after the old gentleman had bidden us good-bye and departed for Euston, there to surrender himself to the cares of business and the hum of a hundred spinning-jennies, far dearer to him, be it remarked, than the sweet music of a straight horn.

'Just imagine that man being brother, companion, and schoolfellow of our poor, dear old dad, who would have driven a thousand miles in a coster's barrow, and handled the donkey well, too, rather than miss his Derby.'

'Well, well, Dick,' said Toby, 'do not let us grumble. You heard what he said, and I believe it's quite true father would have brought everything to the ground, even the top of the great mill chimney stack, the tallest in Lancashire, and the pride of the valley; so do not let us grumble, we must do the best we can. He says he doesn't object to us going to the Highlands. Now here is an advertisement saying that the owner of the Red Deer Coach, from Capercailzie to Rumbling Bridge in Perthshire, intends giving up the route, and that the whole plant, coach, horses, and everything, will be sold by public roup. N.B., says the auctioneer, "A good opportunity for a party who understands the business, as the tourist traffic is excellent in summer, and the hotel people give their patronage."'

'By Jove!' shouted Dick; 'the very thing! We will get all out of him we can, and get off at once. He'll never dream that we will take to coaching in 'the good old-fashioned regular way,' as he calls it, and as to his finding out we need not be afraid of that. He has not been three days away from the mill for the last thirty years, as he says, and so he is not likely to visit the Highlands of Scotland. We can get hold of musty, fusty old Giles Robinson, who was tutor to Sir Harry Jones, and coach to Lord knows who, and go off at once. As soon as we get there we can inspect the stock and the horses, and possibly we may make arrangements to postpone the sale by guaranteeing the proprietor against loss for the season. We can take turn about at driving, booking, and taking charge of the way-bills, doing guard, and managing the stables; and if we do it well we may come out of the whole affair with a profit. What say you?'

'To the Highlands at once!' was the exclamation of Toby and myself; 'and let us lose no time about it, for every day we remain here is lost time, and it will be impossible to get the sale abandoned unless we take time by the forelock.'

CHAPTER II.

'Ladies and gentlemen will please take their seats in the coach to Rumbling Bridge,' said the 'boots' of the McTavish Arms Hotel at Capercailzie on a beautiful morning in August immediately on the arrival of the circular tourist train, which had brought in a large number of people from Oban. One by one the ladies passed up the little ladder, and soon the famous old Red Deer drag was crowded with a gay and brightly dressed company. Yet, though usually very punctual in starting as in finishing, the old Red Deer seemed in no hurry for starting that morning. Up in the smoking-room a small company of persons were peering anxiously out, and these alone knew the secret.

'Toby, my boy, I'm afraid it's all up! I wonder who has gone and split on us; for, depend upon it, he has found it out.'

'I don't think he has, Dick, somehow, or he would have come here at once and stormed us all out of the hotel. My idea is that he is merely having a holiday run through the Highlands along with that old clerk chap, who now, as I am a sinner, I recollect is head book-keeper at the mill, and that he has not the slightest suspicion that we have the coach, which is still in the old proprietor's name.'

'That's all very well even if true, Toby, old man, but who is to drive. There he sits in his favourite seat behind the driver, and there he *will* sit, for I am hanged if I am going to take on the coach to Rumbling Bridge this day.'

'Then I am hanged if I do it,' said Toby.

'Now look here,' I interposed, 'why not make Giles take the ribbons for a bit; the old man has never seen him. Giles can take the coach through the turn well enough, and then he can take ill, and you, Dick (who must turn up unexpectedly as a stranger) must volunteer to take the coach on. As to Toby and myself, we had best keep out of the way.'

'What,' said Giles Robinson, our tutor, in alarm, '*me* drive the coach; why I have not held reins since I was taken off my rocking-horse. Oh, no, indeed. I should tremble with fear for the necks of that goodly company of ladies and gentlemen.'

'Never mind, Giles,' said Dick. 'I shall be on the box, and shall take care that nothing happens to the coach or you. The horses are old stagers, and do not need much driving. There's no time to be lost, for I see the fares are all looking fidgetty.'

The reader will readily gather from the foregoing that the gentleman who held the seat behind that of the driver was none other than our wealthy uncle, Mr. Simon Spools. What brought him there the Lord only knew, but when we saw from the window that he shook hands surprisedly with brother Dick we knew that all was right. It was just a sudden impulse he took to have a run, and had no idea of coming our way at all, or would have written, he said. In fact, he did not know he was in our neighbourhood.

Dick's story is best told in his own words after his return. 'Robinson sat up like a real old mail-coach veteran, gig lamps on his eyes and all, and by pressing his toes and telling him what to do now and then we got on well enough, for, as you know, the horses know all the blind places. I never volunteered to take the ribbons for fear of the old gent getting suspicious; but, as luck would have it, the near leader shied at a brace of pointer dogs which we met a gillie leading when close to the Half-way Inn. Robinson collapsed, but I put them right smartly, and, asking uncle if I might take the horses, as the driver said he was faint and far from well, I soon sent them on at a rare pace, for we were twenty minutes late, and uncle said he must get south by the train that night. We just, however, managed to get into the station at Rumbling Bridge in time. He squeezed my hands hurriedly, said that he hadn't enjoyed

"The near leader shied at a brace of pointers"

such a nice drive since our father died, and that I was the old man's own son he knew from the way I handled the ribbons, and everything.'

The post three days afterwards brought a cheque to Dick for a hundred pounds as a present for catching the train, and with this, the deficit in the season's working being small, we squared up with the proprietor, feeling well qualified for the Four-in-Hand Club.

* * * * *

Uncle Simon has long ago retired from active business, though he still takes great interest in the mill, which he visits but twice a-year, however. No happier bachelor than he resides in the West End of London, and, happy to say, his rooted objection to coaching has long disappeared. Indeed, 'old Spool's' team of chestnuts has been described as one of the grandest that has ever been seen at the Magazine, and the owner is of opinion that there is no better whip than his nephew Dick. Dick winces, however, when the old gentleman begins to tell the way in which his nephew 'tooled' the Red Deer Coach from Capercailzie to Rumbling Bridge when the coachman fell faint and ill. Possibly the explanation he makes at the end, that the catching of that train saved the firm of Spools Brothers 20,000*l.* has something to do with his possessing his well-appointed drag.

AN ANGLER'S ALPHABET.

By H. L. I.

A was the Angler with fly-rod in hand,
B was the Brook where he first took his stand,
C was the Cast he unwound from his hat,
D was the Dropper, dependent from that;
E was the Eddy, where lay the big trout,
F was the Fly that inveigled him out,
G was the Gut which gave way with the strain,
H was the Hook that was ne'er seen again;
I was the Ire, much expressed by big D,
J Joy of the fish as he felt himself free,
K was the Knot so unskilfully tied,
L the Loss which it caused, fish and temper beside.
M was the Millpool, so famed for its trout,
N was the Net, you should not be without;
O was the Oilskin, in case of a shower,
P Perseverance, the angler's best dower;

Q the Quillgnat you so artfully threw,
R was the Rise that responded thereto,
S was the Stroke that imbedded the steel,
T was the Trout, which did not grace the creel;
U was the Union, alas! quickly severed,
V the Vict'ry to gain which you vainly endeavoured,
W was the Weed that entangled the cast,
X the Extinction of Hope at the last;
Y was the Youth, who ran up at your call,
Z what he did—Zero—nothing at all.

PULLING HORSES.

ONE OF THE FINE ARTS.

By 'A WISEACRE.'

THERE are several species of pulling in connexion with horses on the turf; but it is of one kind only which it is my hint to speak, as Othello puts it. Of course we all know that there is pulling off a good thing with a smart horse; also there is the good pull at a bottle of jumping-powder before getting on a horse, which is often needed. There is, moreover, pulling a horse's head nearly off by a backward haul, as mentioned by *The Licensed Victualler's Gazette*, and there is that particular species of pulling a horse, known to the patrons of the turf as 'kidding,' such as can be only practised by experts in the business, the full intent and meaning of which last-named term lately exercised the united intellect of six eminent counsel learned in the law, a special British jury, and a Lord Chief Justice, in the famous Wood Libel Case.

It is my intention to illustrate the 'kidding' performance, under the head of pulling a steeplechase horse, or rather a pair of such horses at the same time, by an anecdote which, if of the apparently improbable kind and of the long-ago order, is nevertheless perfectly truthful, for I had it from the lips of one of the actual pullers. My informant successfully practised the operation, undetected, in the interests of his employer and friends, and, as it turned out, the betting-ring; but to the disgust and anger of a portion of an outraged public, yclept the talent, who were perfect specimens of those fools who, it is said, always will rush in where angels fear to tread.

Inasmuch as all the principal actors in this little comedy of 'pully-hauly' are dead and gone, and since *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a motto which we should all wish to have applied to ourselves when we shall have been buried on suspicion of being defunct, I will refrain from mentioning the real names of the pullers or the pulled, contenting myself by conveying to the Editor, for his personal satisfaction, the proper titles of both horses and riders about to be exploited.

It was a big steeplechase in the Shires, over thirty years ago, for which there were stript twelve grand jumping gees able and willing to negotiate a country, the fences of which, in these modern and more degenerate days, would be designated unfair and impracticable. A very favourite, scientific, and successful gentleman rider (whom we will call Jem Carpenter), and an equally famous but probably even more skilful professional jockey (whom we will call Tom Roland), were respectively engaged to ride Tweedledum and Tweedledee, two of the lot prepared to face the starter. Such was the marked reputation and ability of these horses and their riders that both steeds were soon hot favourites in the market. 'The field, bar two,' was the shout of the bookmakers. Each of our two horses carried a mint of money as the dozen cantered past the stand; but Tweedledee bore none for his owner, Mr. Correct-Card (of Wales), or for his jockey and friends, because the talent had forestalled them, and in consequence the owner had declined to back Tweedledee in such dangerous company, and in a jumping race at a short price. Indeed, just before the horses paraded, the little Tweedledee party set to work in different portions of the ring to plank down their family plate on Tweedledum, and Tom Roland was told, in the euphony of the Turf, by his employer to have 'an easy ride.' It is needless to add that Thomas, the *débonnaire*—who had a bosom friend in one of the principal bookmakers with a large *clientèle*—managed to secure for himself a very substantial *solatium* for making that calculating knight of the metallics sure that Tweedledee was a 'stiff one,' so that he could pepper him freely.

The first time round informed Tom and Jem for a certainty that the horses which they bestrode were the only two with a chance, for they were a long way in advance of the rest as they drew near to the penultimate fence. Up to this point they had not exchanged a word, but here Jem broke silence, and called out, 'Go on, Tommy! I'm beat!'

'Ha! ha!' said Mr. Thomas Roland to himself. 'Sits the wind in that quarter? Got orders to pull, has he? I must clap on my considering cap.'

So, having thus spoken to himself, he addressed his good horse, whose ears were always open to the sound of his master's woe, and caused him to slacken his speed without any corresponding restraint of rein or movement of hand. This act let Jem's horse pass him, and Tweedledum, with the ardour of emulation strong within him, pricked up his tapering ears till they nearly met, as he prepared to take the fence in front of him in his stride. But ere he could rise at the rasper, down tumbled Jem the Carpenter from his saddle, and turned loose his horse, which, checked by his falling rider, did not attempt to jump the obstacle; but ran alongside it with the reins hanging on his neck —for the adroit Jem had purposely so left them to prevent Tweedledum from impeding his flight by stepping on them. Tom, who was on the alert and prepared to act on 'the occasion sudden,' lost no time in catching his friend's horse and restoring it to him, putting on a bit of fair-play swagger, as he shouted, 'Jump up, Jimmy, before the other beggars are in sight. Let's make a race of it. I'll never take advantage of a friend in difficulties.'

'Oh, d——n your consideration and politeness,' growled Jem, who felt considerably cornered, but more determined than ever not to win even though he had to finish on horseback.

The owner of Tweedledee and his friends had reckoned upon Tom doing a shunt without such tomfoolery as he was practising, 'plain for all folk to see.' They girded at him from the Grand Stand accordingly—yet refrained from clothing their thoughts with words—while the bookmaker, who had laid long odds against Tweedledee, had sore misgivings as to Tom's intentions, and was nearly going off his head. The friends and backers of Jem were, on the other hand, outspoken in praise of this noble act of generosity on the part of Tom—the true descendant of the Norman Roland—and the whole lot of them, including the real lovers of a good race on its merits, looked on at the strange spectacle with the utmost curiosity as the horses—with Jem, in the sulks, remounted—were set going again at the fence in front of them.

The last fence but one was jumped by both horses abreast, and Jem had made up his mind to ride on the wrong side of the flag-post of the last fence which bounded the winning field. However, the wily Thomas was too *prevenant* for him. He managed to roll off into the ditch as Tweedledee landed, and Jem, not to be done, pulled up to return the compliment of catching his horse. But, horror to behold, the beditched Thomas held in his hand Tweedledee's bridle, the throat lash of which he had unbuckled in order to draw it off over his steed's head as he carefully sought Mother Earth. There was no catching Tweedledee for another half hour, for that generous steed had gone off, running heel, at a pace which betokened the quantity and quality of vigour still left in him.

The advent of the Clerk of the Course, who rode up to see the meaning of these curious proceedings—very inopportunely, as Jem considered—had the effect of inducing that skilful and elegantly-attired gentleman-jockey to ride alone on Tweedledum past the judge's box, and to land, unwillingly, the stakes for his owner, who emphasised by gesture his contempt for a horseman who would permit himself to be outdone in strategy by a gipsy-looking jockey, who gave him a regular Roland for an Oliver.

A ’CUTE CUEIST.

By ‘AN OUTSIDER.’

SMUGGLETON-ON-SEA is not much of a place in summer; ‘it is no place’ every man says who finds himself there in winter. Yet the Smuggletonians do not think so: in fact, they, with not a little conceit, consider that their little town ranks with Brighton, Buxton, Scarborough, and Oban; and some one having discovered a little fountain in the hills when very thirsty, the water of which tasted most unpleasantly, wrote a letter to the *Times* to say that he had discovered a mineral well. Henceforth the Smuggletonians dubbed their place the Spa of South Leekland. From that day the lame, and the blind, and the broken down began to frequent Smuggleton at certain seasons, a hydropathic establishment was founded, and in order not to let the water-cure people have it all their own way an enterprising London company ran up the Marine and Mineral Water Hotel, the advertisements of which may be seen on the sides of every railway platform in the United Kingdom, along with a most lively view of Smuggleton-on-Sea.

Amongst the most regular frequenters of Smuggleton were the officers of her Majesty's gunboat *Thunderbolt*. The *Thun-*

derbolt had been stationed on the coast for some years, for what particular purpose no one ever could find out. It was cruelly advanced by some that a late Lord of the Admiralty, who was very stingy and very hard up, and would not or could not afford a yacht to cruise off his little property, which was situated a few miles up the coast, had got her brought round from Portsmouth ostensibly to protect the cockle-fisheries and keep peace amongst the rather turbulent fish-hawking wives of the neighbourhood. The officers of the ship never cared to inquire too deeply into the story, for fear that they might be taken off the station altogether, when possibly the coast of Africa would have been given them as a cruising ground. It was a little dull in winter, they knew, but then they could cruise about from place to place, and make themselves as happy as they cared to be in summer. Smuggleton Bay being the best anchorage in South Leekland, Smuggleton was their headquarters, and the Marine and Mineral Water Hotel was their nightly rendezvous when ashore. There, night after night, they met to play billiards, pyramids, shell-out, pool, and more particularly black pool, which is rather a favourite green cloth game with the navy.

It was whilst they were busy at the ordinary game of pool one wet and stormy evening just after the boat came in that a rather handsome and exceedingly smart-looking stranger entered the billiard-room. Halting till the player, young Doublebright, of the *Thunderbolt*, played his stroke, he took his seat on one of the cushions opposite with the remark, 'Well played, indeed, sir!' as the green ball rolled into the middle pocket, and the marker shouted, 'Green dead! star one!' an assertion and response which was followed by the player of green proceeding to place his cue in the rack.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said the stranger, 'may I have your star one?'

'Certainly, if the other players do not object,' was the reply; 'we are playing shilling pool, and sixpence a life.'

There was a general exclamation of 'No objection!' from different parts of the room, and certainly there need not have been, for some players had three lives left. Lighting a cheroot, and choosing a cue from the rack, the stranger waited till the cry came, 'Green on the yellow! blue's your player!' Taking the ball from the bottom pocket he tried to force the yellow into the left top pocket, but failed, and came right slap down the table to be away from the blue, only to land in the corner pocket. A laugh followed, amid a general remark of 'Hard lines, indeed!' He, however, deposited his sixpence on the table-rail, having previously paid his shilling to the marker, and returned to his seat with the remark, 'Billiards is dear here at eighteen pence a stroke!'

About twenty minutes afterwards the game was finished, and the marker, rattling the balls in the large bottle basket kept for the purpose, asked the stranger if he should put in a ball for him.

'Certainly,' was the reply, 'Smuggleton-on-Sea, or Smuggleton-at-Sea, however it may be called, is not such a particularly cheery place that we may not join in a little pool, though it was for peace, quietness, and a drop of the waters that I came here.'

'I'm afraid you'll find it about the slowest hole in all England,' said Doublebright; 'what we would do here without a billiard-table I don't know. What they did do before the "Marine" here was erected I cannot imagine.'

'Well,' was the stranger's reply, 'it's consoling in some of these places to find people that can play pool as well as a table to play it on. In the last little watering-place I was in there was one of those little five-pound bagatelle-tables, and even that was looked upon by the natives as a regular gambling-machine.'

'In search of health?' said Captain Binnacle; 'the old thing, I suppose,' and he gave his little finger an upward twirl.

'Well, I suppose I must plead guilty,' was the quiet reply; 'seeing life now-a-days means getting quit of it, and I've been more in the gaslight than the daylight during the last few years than most people.'

It was soon evident to the men of the *Thunderbolt* that the stranger was but an indifferent player at pool, missing the easiest strokes, and leaving his ball not unfrequently near the top of a pocket. Yet he had plenty of money, more money evidently than he could well take care of, as he betted two half-crowns to one once with young Doublebright that he could do a stroke which, had he known anything at all about billiards, he must have perceived was impossible. So at least thought Doublebright; so at least thought Jack Gantrees, and they exchanged significant glances. Both of them were fond of flat-catching, and here, they thought, was a nice fool of a fellow come down to Smuggleton to take the waters and get quit of his surplus cash.

The two who were the best players halved the pool with two lives each, and it being nigh the hour of closing a game of billiards was proposed by Gantrees, and to this the stranger assented. He was no player, no player at all, he could assure the *Thunderbolt's* first-lieutenant; and so the latter agreed to concede him twenty points in a hundred. This he succeeded in doing, the stranger playing like the most veritable novice, putting on 'wrong side,' 'screw' when screw was not required, and forcing his opponent's ball into a pocket with a chuckle whenever he got a chance.

'Oh,' was his remark at the finish, 'I shall no doubt improve before I leave Smuggleton. I had always the reputation of being clever at anything when I was at school, and no doubt I shall soon be first-rate at billiards; it's just a case of knowing the proper angles, you know, and hitting them on the right side.'

As he said all this with the simplicity of a ten-year-old who had never crossed the Asses' Bridge, one or two of the *Thunderbolt's* men gave him a look of compassion, but said nothing.

'Angles or angels,' remarked one quietly to his neighbour, 'Doublebright and Gantrees will let him know how much there is in the game before he gets out of Smuggleton.'

Retiring to the bar all enjoyed a farewell glass and a pipe, the stranger being, however innocent, a fellow of infinite anecdote. There was scarcely a town in England he had not visited, scarcely a gentleman in England he was not on speaking terms with, and he knew every man in the army and navy. Old Magnet, the oldest of them all, could swear to this, for he could imitate the peculiarities of many old friends so well that he broke through his usual custom of having but one glass before going on board, and ordered another, calling on the stranger to join him. But now the boat from the *Thunderbolt* was waiting, and so, shaking hands, and wishing him a pleasant night's rest and success with the waters, they bade him good-bye, Magnet saying that he was a deuced good sort, and for the sake of old friends, whom they had both known, he must show him some attention and ask him to mess.

Mr. George Fitzgeorge, as the stranger had entered himself on the visitors' book of the hotel, did not seem to be such an invalid as he had represented himself to be—at least, in the dining-room. The landlord, accustomed to visitors who were under orders to eat sparingly, looked aghast when he saw the great gap he had made in a leg of mutton on the first day. At breakfast, too, he ate as much as any other four men, and excused himself at the finish generally with having 'little appetite.' As to the waters he drank, it was generally noticed that they were seltzer or soda, and were taken with a little brandy 'just to take the chill off.' Each of the three succeeding nights to that on which he played pool with the *Thunderbolt* fellows, as he termed them, he also spent in the billiard-room, the entertainment being varied by an occasional hand at 'Nap.' in the bar-parlour. At this game he showed himself to be much more efficient than at billiards, and every time it came to his deal he seemed to succeed in getting the most wonderful hands. Doublebright and Gantrees had both come to the conclusion that he must have aces and kings, like the Heathen Chinee, up his sleeve; but his simple style of playing, and his laughing remarks about his having always been a lucky fellow in getting hands at cards, drove away such ideas. On the fourth night he dined on board the *Thunderbolt*, and came off at six next morning quite sober, and looking wonderfully well pleased with himself, more so than was usually the case with fellows who went on board that ship for a quiet hand at cards. Though late of going to bed, he sat down to breakfast at nine, his usual hour, and with appetite undiminished. Clearly he was about the healthiest of the unhealthy men who came to Smuggleton in search of health, for as James, the head waiter, could tell you, the 'man who dines with them hofficers don't, as a rule, want no breakfast for a fortnight arterwards, and, what's more, they wouldn't need to, as they generally comes ashoore without as much left as would pay the bill.'

Mr. Fitzgeorge, however, was not one of that sort, for he had brought with him all that the paymaster of the ship had got on board, and all, as he told his friends, through his wonderful luck in getting hands. True, he explained, it had not all been made over the stakes, for he'd betted once a clear hundred—just a clear wager—that Doublebright, who sat on his left, wouldn't make his 'Nap.;' and, would you believe it? he had ace, king, queen, knave of spades, and ace of hearts, and, by the merest accident, I had ten, nine, eight, seven, and six of trumps, and caught him! Wasn't it wonderful? Oh! and to think, too, that it was my deal, and that I should have given him such a 'Nap. hand to lose.'

It was not till late in the afternoon that the *Thunderbolt* men came ashore. All of them complained of being drowsy, and one or two of having bad headaches, amongst others Doublebright.

'A slight touch of headache, eh?' said Fitzgeorge, passing over the sherry and the bottle of angustura bitters.

'Humph!' was the response; 'that six of hearts of yours cost me a hundred, which, I hope, you'll give me a chance of winning back.'

'Certainly. Shall we have another night at Napoleon?'

'No!' was the reply, with a shrug of the shoulders; 'it's not that you know the game better than I do, but you do seem to succeed in getting such rattling good hands.'

'Luck!' was the reply, as he twirled his cigarette with his finger and thumb. 'I was always lucky at cards. Now you are lucky at billiards; there's nothing in your play more than mine, but, you see, you go in when I miss the pocket by just a hairbreadth!'

Was he joking? Doublebright looked at him keenly. But no, the biggest beef eater of an invalid that ever came to Smuggleton was apparently unconscious of being humorous.

'So you think there's nothing but luck in my play at billiards?'

'Certainly I do!' was the response. 'All luck, pure luck.'

'And do you think that if you had luck on your side you could play me even?'

'Well, not altogether; but with twenty points in a hundred I think I would beat you.'

'Then I think you might let me have a chance of winning my hundred back at billiards?'

'Certainly!' was the quick reply; 'my dear fellow, that's what's been annoying me all the forenoon. Here am I, a stranger, come down to enjoy a little quietness, and I meet you *Thunderbolt* fellows, who are all so kind to me. Then I find myself dining with you on board your ship, chatting about old chums with your friend Magnet, sipping a little brandy-and-soda, and unguardedly betting a hundred when it's two to one—ay, ten to one—against me, and win! No, no! my boy! by all means let's have it out at billiards! Shall we say to-morrow afternoon? I leave, you know, by to-morrow night's steamer.'

'You do? Then let's settle it to-morrow afternoon. To-morrow afternoon at two o'clock sharp. I shall tell the landlord to keep the table for us.'

That night, after dinner, Mr. George Fitzgeorge did not join in the customary game of pool. He felt a little drowsy, and said that he must retire early, seeing that he had such an important game of billiards on next day. So he bade the Thunderbolters good night, and went to his room, not, however, to repose, but to pack his portmanteau. This done, he sat down, and, with his head between his hands, began to consider his position. 'I'm clearly one hundred and twenty to the good, even with six or seven off for my hotel bill, so I have every reason to be content; but as this fool of a fellow wants his revenge, I suppose I must be charitable and give it to him. But should Captain Snouter, this friend of old Magnet's, who has arrived by the boat, and gone up to the Hydropathic to get his old gin-and-bittered liver touched up, and his Gold Coast ague rubbed out of him with a rough towel, appear on the scene, then it's all up with me. Ha! ha! fancy my talking to old Mag. about him, and here this afternoon he of all men should turn up with the steamer! By Jove! what a lark there would have been if he had arrived in time and been asked to meet me at mess! Well, luck's in my way, but only just in time; to-morrow I'm off as soon as the game is over. Ahem! Doublebright's sure to pay by cheque, and that might be stopped. I must see about that, however.'

Just as he had finished his reverie he heard the boatswain's pipe trilling at the pier, and the boat came off as usual from the *Thunderbolt* to take the officers on board. In a few minutes afterwards he saw it pull back from the pier steps again, and then he descended the stairs, where, as he expected, he found the landlord still sitting. Telling him that he intended leaving next afternoon, he asked for his bill to be made up till breakfast time next morning, and on its being presented tendered two five-pound notes. Whilst being paid back the change he said, 'And now, landlord, may I ask you a question in confidence. I'm likely to be short possibly to-morrow, and I've a cheque on London of Mr. Doublebright's upstairs. Is it quite good enough?'

'Is it good enough?' ejaculated Boniface; 'many a one of his cheques have I cashed. Yes, and I would cash any one to-morrow, or, what's the same, give you an open cheque for it, supposing it was for a hundred or two hundred pounds!'

'Thanks, very much; it's for a hundred. If I should want an open cheque for it to-morrow before starting I suppose you won't mind giving me one?'

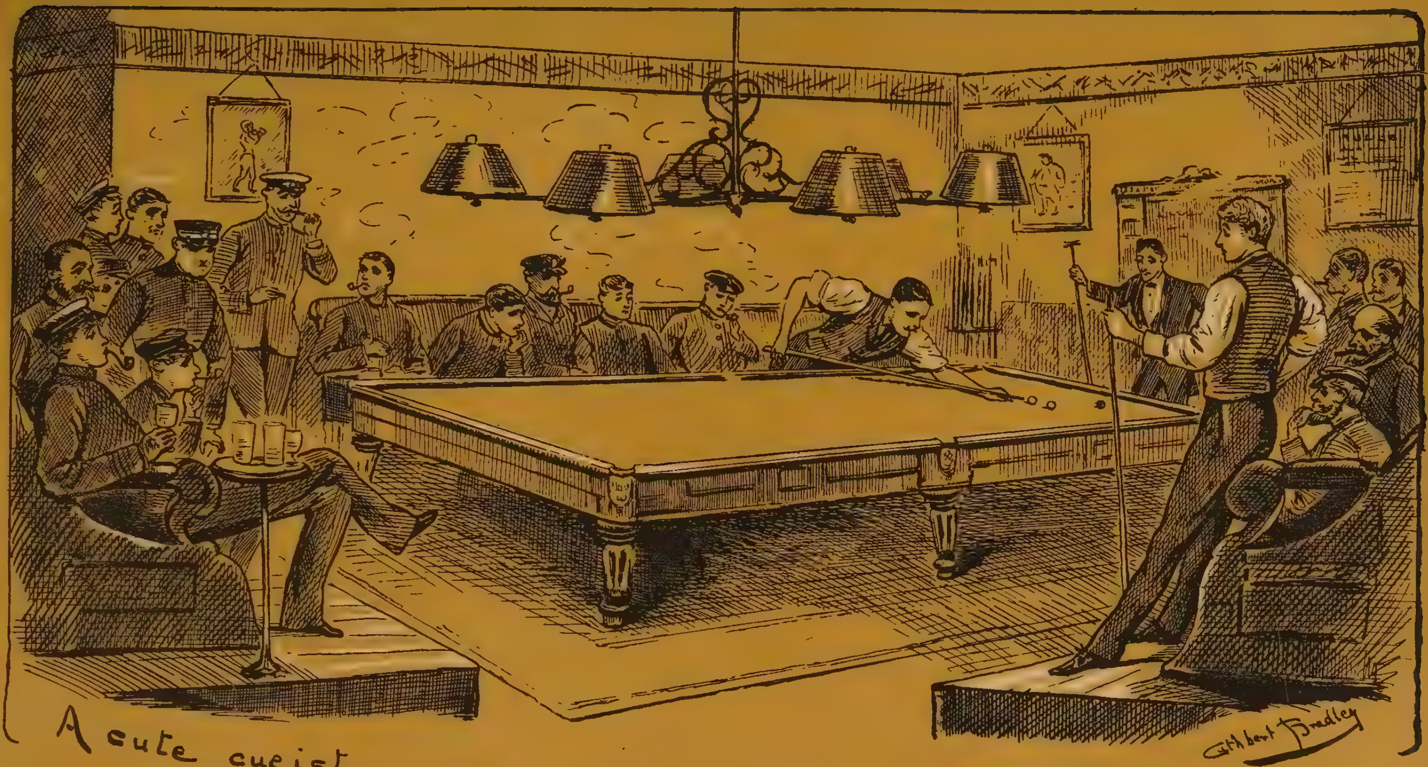
'Not in the least; or, what's the same, I'll endorse it, and you'll get it cashed here at any bank agent's in town.'

'Thank you very much. Good night,' was the reply. 'I will see you in the morning about it.'

* * * * * *

At half-past one o'clock p.m. next day the marker carefully brushed over the billiard-table, shoved back the ivory indicators on the marking-board, and, with chin fixed on both hands clasped over the rest, awaited the coming of the competitors. The Thunderbolters were the first to arrive, and Doublebright, in a most gleeful manner, commenced to knock the balls about with his private cue. A little afterwards Mr. George Fitzgeorge entered the room, apologising for being a little late. 'I've just been seeing my luggage labelled,' he said, 'and placed on the wharf. I'll have little enough time, you know!' Seizing the cue he had been in the habit of playing with, he at once strung for break, Doublebright following suit. The latter won, and gave a double baulk, and Fitzgeorge gave a miss to the middle of the right cushion. Off this his opponent succeeded in scoring, and soon run up the twenty points of the allowance. Jack Gantrees now thought it was time to make a bet, and offered to lay six pounds to four on the non-striker, Doublebright. To his surprise he was 'taken,' and not only that, but asked to repeat it, which he did, the acceptor meanwhile taking from his pocket *a little bit of chalk* fixed in a small silver box, such as professionals sometimes use, and chalking the point of his cue carefully. At the same time he seemed a little nervous, and no wonder, for he had just heard one of the company say, 'Magnet's gone up to bring his old friend Snouter down from the Hydro. Snouter, he says, is a crack player, and very fond of the game.' 'He'll have to be quick,' Fitzgeorge murmured to himself; 'and so will I.' Running through the white in the most dexterous manner into the middle pocket, he forced his opponent's ball to the spot end of the table. From baulk he cannoned, put down the white, and planted himself behind the red. All this was done so quickly, and so cleverly, and so differently from his former lackadaisical style of play, that Doublebright's breath was almost taken away. Without ever looking up he executed fifteen spot strokes, which, with points and what he had made, brought him up to 85, the game being called, 23—85. Doublebright, quite astounded, failed to make an easy cannon, and Fitzgeorge, getting hold of the balls, ran out with three cannons and three losing hazards.

The muttering of man-of-war language was loud, the stamping of feet was terrific; and the hissed words, 'Infernal Sharp,' might



A cute cueist.

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have been heard outside in the street. Fitzgeorge was the only silent man, and he waited to be addressed by his opponent. The latter, however, merely ordered the marker to bring him a pen and ink, and on this being brought produced a cheque-book of Coutts & Co.'s, wrote in the body of it 'a hundred pounds,' and signed it Benjamin Doublebright. This he tossed down on the table, whilst Gantrees threw down two five-pound notes and two sovereigns. Mr. Fitzgeorge drew them to him with a smile, looked at them, bowed, said, 'Good morning. I hope you have had your revenge! You're not a bad set of fellows, but *slow*, devilish *slow!*' Two minutes afterwards he had received an open cheque for a hundred pounds from the landlord, and five minutes afterwards he had cashed it, remarking to himself, 'They may stop the Coutts & Co.'s one when they please.' As he crossed the street to the pier he met Magnet with his friend Snouter, but refused to wait and speak.

'That's he!' said the Thunderbolter.

'Who?' asked Snouter.

'The Hon. George Fitzgeorge.'

'The Honourable Fitzdevil!' was the reply. 'That's Winkle, who was billiard-marker at the "Rag Tag" and the "United Bayonet and Bumboat," the biggest scoundrel that ever handled a cue or shuffled a pack o' cards. I hope he's not done any of you.'

'I'm afraid he has—but here comes Doublebright. Well, my boy, what luck?'

'Luck be hanged! that fellow's been a rank imposter; he can play as well as Cook or Roberts. Not only has he my hundred of hard cash, but he's off with a cheque for another hundred on Coutts & Co.'s.!'

'Then stop it, my boy! wire and stop it at once!' said Snouter. 'I know him. His name is Winkle, and he is well known to the police!'

* * * * * *

Captain Doublebright did as directed just as the steamer sailed out of the bay. Judge of his surprise on finding the landlord come on board two mornings afterwards in high dudgeon at his cheque being returned.

'Oh, dear!' he sighed. 'Serve me right; I thought to be clever, and was done. No match at all am I for a man with

"A little bit of cheek and a little bit of chalk"

—in fact, a 'Cute Cueist.'

A RIDE ON A BUFFALO.

By WILF POCKLINGTON.

THAT'S a fine skin, Bob! Is it impertinent to ask where and how you obtained it? You are such a terrible old 'globe-trotter' that most of your things carry a yarn or a reminiscence along with them! If so, let's have it, by all means!'

The speaker was Cornet Blakesley, recently gazetted to the Household Brigade. The skin under consideration was that of an enormous buffalo lying upon the floor of one of the rooms in the 'Albany' occupied by Colonel Dacre, or Bob Dacre as he was familiarly called. Young Blakesley had been dining with him, and was now stretched out in an easy chair enjoying a cigar, and attempting to draw out Colonel Bob on some of his strange adventures in the world of sport in other and distant climes.

'That! Oh, yes! that's my Colorado buffalo, the one I killed away back in the sixties, and you are right in surmising that there is a yarn connected with it. Of course, I have shot scores of buffalo, I might almost say hundreds, but this is the only skin I ever took the trouble to send home, and it recalls one of the closest shaves I ever experienced.

'I had made my headquarters at Fort Wallace, as I knew several of the fellows there (and high old times we used to have,' he added, parenthetically), 'but was frequently away for a week or two at a time, although there was plenty of good shooting anywhere beyond ten miles of the fort. One day I went out alone, and struck right away into the prairie towards where some rich rank grass grew that I felt certain would attract any buffalo that were in the neighbourhood. My anticipations proved correct, and after about a four hours' walk I struck a herd of "buffer" right in the centre of the patch. It was a very long stalk; but the wind being right, and the location favourable, I eventually managed to get within range, and dropped three with my Winchester before they raced out of sight.'

'Not bad shooting.'

'Well, I imagine not, if you know anything of buffalo and their habits. I took off the saddles, leaving the carcasses for my man to fetch with the waggon next day, and started on my homeward way. I must have been some time stalking and dressing them, for by the time I struck out on the home stretch it was nearly dark. Not that it made any difference, for I knew my bearings perfectly, and could find my way almost anywhere by the light of the stars. I had walked perhaps half an hour when I heard the unmistakable sound of a herd of buffaloes ahead of me, but could not make out in which direction they were travelling, so I decided to keep right on, and in about half a mile I came up with them, and found they were moving in the same direction as myself, lazily grazing as they went, taking not the least notice of my approach further than that one of the hinder ones would every now and again lag behind, and on catching sight of me would bolt with a terrified snort right into the thick of the tightly-packed herd. If I had wanted meat in quantity I could have hamstrung half the herd. I had been told of Indians catching up with a large herd at night and doing this without disturbing the remainder, but I never fully credited it until I found myself quietly walking along behind an endless stretch of backs and horns. As they progressed too slowly for me, I made a detour to the right so as to get round the edge of the herd, and so make better time for home; but I had not gone one hundred feet before I met with a living, moving wall of buffalo. I then tried the left, but found it to be the same. I was nonplussed, and stood still a few seconds to try and think it out, when to my astonishment another mass came out of the darkness in the rear, and slowly moved me on. I grasped the situation at once, although it was so dark I could not see fifty yards in any direction. I had unwittingly walked right into the very centre of a herd of buffaloes as they rounded the corner of a patch of grass, any plainsman could tell how. The herd had been spread out in a long line, and as the leaders had struck the grass and stopped to graze, the others, finding their progress impeded, had switched off, as it were, anxious to reach the grass themselves, and had caught me between the two flanks, which, closing up in front and behind, had enclosed me with them—the darkness, the absence of any wind, the attention paid to the grass, my clothes being covered with buffalo hair and blood, and the fresh meat upon my shoulder, all tending to distract their attention from my presence, and so failed to produce the alarm that the proximity of man usually creates. I was in a small square, with animals all around me, how many deep I did not know, probably a mile or so each way. This square was gradually growing smaller, and every now and again an old bull would dash into the opening, bellow with rage, stamp his hoofs, and, making a blind toss at the grass, rush through into the front half of the herd. I was not by any means anxious for a fight, and I knew very well that a stampede meant death, a death, too, that would leave me literally trampled into the earth out of all semblance of human shape. A hundred ideas crossed my mind—one, that I would turn and charge the rear, emptying my Winchester and revolver, and trust to the herd splitting at the sudden onslaught, when, protected by the pile formed by the dead, the others might pass, leaving me unharmed; but I had not the slightest idea how far they extended in the rear, and knew if it happened to be very far they would crowd one another in beyond the possibility of a "split," knocking me over by sheer weight of the outside columns. The bulls soon became more and more restless and irritated, and, as the edges closed in upon me, it took all my time, and kept all my wits on the alert, to dodge them, as one after another they detached themselves from the rear and rushed bellowing across the narrow space to join those in front. At last the sides closed in so that I had not six square feet in which to move, and could touch the sides of my limit by stretching out my hands. I noticed, also, that the buffalo grass was getting thinner, and knew that as soon as the patch was cleared they would start at a slow, swinging trot for water, which, granting I could keep my feet, and not be crushed by the animals on either side of me, must inevitably force me to drop from sheer exhaustion before a halt was called. In such moments one thinks quickly and clearly, and acts promptly. It was not the first time I had been in a tight place, and I now determined to make a bold stroke for freedom. Slowly, cautiously, and with measured movement, I slung my rifle behind my back, tightening the strap a little to make it sit easier and closer (my beef I had dropped some time previously), thrust my knife well home into its sheath, and looked to the loop strap of my revolver, then I edged up close to a fine, powerful young bull, apparently about three years old, and, making a spring, landed fairly upon his back, sinking my hands deep into the long hair that grew upon his shoulders; then gave a yell that might have been heard a mile away. My bull plunged, and reared almost upright, and the remainder of the herd stampeded; then commenced a sight that beggars description. The moon rose slowly above the horizon, and as

"Onwards! Onwards!"

its rays flooded my surroundings, I perceived, far as the eye could reach, a tossing, swaying, surging mass, that rushed onwards with a thunder of hoof-beats that seemed to shake the stars. Onwards! onwards! the sand and dust flying up into my face, the buffaloes crowding and jostling each other in a mad endeavour to get into the front rank, and away from the vague and alarming fright that had started them off in this mad race the result of which it was impossible to forsee. On over gulches and hollows, up hill and down, through tangled grasses, over scrub bushes, through or over small pools of water lying in the "wallows," now with a few inches of space around me, now with the heaving flanks of the bulls on either side crushed against my legs until the bones seemed to flatten and crack. Blinded with sweat that was clogged with adhering dust and flying hair, covered with foam and spume, sickened and half suffocated with the stench of the over-heated animals, dizzy and half unconscious of anything but just the coarse hair between my fingers, and the instinctive grip of my knees upon the sides of my mad steed, I was carried through the air, it might have been for one hour, it might have been ten. Every now and again an animal in front reared and fell, causing a slight swerve or a leap as we bounded over it, the very earth trembled and shook with the vibration of the thousands of hoofs, the air grew thick and heavy with their breathing, and oppressed me, a steam seemed to arise, eyes gleamed and glared around me, the grip of my fingers seemed to loosen, the same weakness seized my knees; I felt that I was simply balanced on my steed, and that I was swaying horribly from side to side. I would have screamed, but my tongue was dry and swollen; everything seemed to swim around me, my breath became more laboured, the moon became only a broad band of light that stretched from east to west, studded with glittering orbs that came and went at will, other human forms appeared beside me on the animals, pulling me off the back of the one I rode. I seemed falling, falling; and then a sudden, sharp swerve to the right gave a jerk that seemed to arouse my fast-benumbing faculties. Instinctively I opened my eyes, and saw the high bank of the Union Pacific Road, which at that point was steep and crumbly, and the herd, unable to climb its precipitous front, unable, by reason of those behind, to stop in their mad career, had divided, rushing to right and left, still at a headlong rate of speed. As we rushed along parallel with the high ridge carrying the track, the reaction of the previous tension seemed to sweep over me, and, as my animal rushed along at the edge of the split herd, with a last effort I leaned forward, placed the muzzle of my revolver close to the poor brute's head, and pulled the trigger. He plunged forward and fell on his knees; I flew over his head, and a blank followed. When I recovered my senses I lay about twenty feet from the carcass. After I went over his head he must have arisen, plunged over or past me, and lay stone dead on the prairie. I rested a little, skinned him, and walked the six miles into camp with my skin. My ride with the herd had covered about sixteen miles, and is so vividly impressed upon my mind that every detail is as clear now as it was over twenty years ago, when I sat on the prairie, with the dead brute at my feet, trying to pull myself together so as to reach camp. Yes, that's his skin. See! here's the bullet hole just above the ear!'

Colonel Bob looked into the fire with a grave, thoughtful air as though mentally recalling the past; then, rousing himself with a shake, 'You ought to take a run over to the West, Blakesley; it is a wonderful place, and puts great ideas into a young man's head. What shall we do for an hour? theatre or club? Club! All right! come along!' and together they went out into the night.

'BETTER THAN ALL.'—A POLO SONG.

By C. G.

TIS grand to sail over post and rail, with a brook in the bottom below,
With hounds running mute, as the gallant old brute of a fox is sinking slow;
But the ring of the ball, and cheery call of a pal in the thickest row,
With a bamboo stick and a pony quick, are better than all, I vow.

It thrills the heart with the grouse flying smart, and you're crouching low out of sight,
While the old cock birds are coming a lick, and intend to be far this night.
A right and left, on the heather they lie, as your aim is a good one now;
But a bamboo stick and a pony quick are better than all, I vow.

You've come three miles on the favourite, and the crowd are beginning to roar,
Out of seventeen starters ten minutes ago, you can now count only four;

You feel you are fit, and the nag has a bit left in him to finish with now;
Yet a bamboo stick and a pony quick are better than all, I vow.

It's sweet to some, when evening's come, to the strains of soft music to
move
O'er the polished hall, with the belle of the ball, in the valse time of
young love;
But the heart of the sportsman thrills to its core,
To the cry, 'Ride him out, he's got it once more!'
And the ball flies quick to the well-aimed stick.
'It's a goal! no it's not! a backhander! *Now!*
Yes, a bamboo stick and a pony quick are better than all, I vow.

RETALIATION.

'*By* UMBRA.'

JEM HETHERLEY was a long, strong stripling, rising sixteen, and, at the time we are writing, was spending his holidays with his uncle Emmanuel, who had invited him for a few weeks to Twarley Hall, a remote place on the Welsh Border, and just on the outskirts of Newton Brian.

Lord Bluffborough, a very great man in the county, was the Lord of the Manor, and it so happened that a little coolness, on account of political differences, existed between Emmanuel Hetherley and his lordship.

Now Emmanuel had given his nephew a single-barrelled gun, telling him that he might go out and shoot crows, or even rabbits, now and then, if he chanced to come across any. So Jem went forth with gun on shoulder, closely followed by his uncle's spaniel and fox-terrier. He had not gone far before he shot a rabbit, which he managed to cram into his jacket-pocket. Jem was proud of his achievement, and having once, as it were, tasted blood, wanted more. He had by this time quite reached the limits of his uncle's estate, and was on some very hilly ground adjoining land belonging to Lord Bluffborough. Looking over a wooden fence he perceived the two dogs busy at some rabbit burrows. The terrier was vigorously scratching at the earth, as if endeavouring to make a hole large enough for her own ingress, while the spaniel was crouching in an expectant attitude ready to pounce upon whatever came forth. Jem thoughtlessly went to the two dogs, called them from their sport, and then walked higher up the hill, thinking he would bag one more rabbit and then return home. He had not gone far ere the terrier started a rabbit, and, as it bounded along its run in some long grass, Jem shot, and the rabbit rolled over, dead as a stone. Just as he was about to step forward to pick it up he observed a man, with a double-barrelled gun on his shoulder, standing only a few yards off: he must have come round the brow of the hill, for Jem had not before noticed him.

'Hullo!' shouted the man; 'what beest thou doing here?'

'Can't you see?' was Jem's answer.

'Yes, I'm dom'd if I connor.'

'Then why did you ask?' retorted Jem, as he picked up the rabbit.

'Drop that rabbit!' cried the man.

'Not likely,' was the reply; and Jem crammed it into his other pocket.

'Then I'll teach thee to come shooting here,' said Joel Morgan, Lord Bluffborough's head keeper, who now stepped up to Jem and forcibly wrenched the gun from his hands. Jem did not approve of such rough usage; but the man was too strong for him: he, however, stepped back, said nothing, but closely watched Joel's movements. Joel placed Jim's gun on the ground, and began taking his own apart, and, as he placed the barrels in one of the capacious pockets of his velveteen jacket, said, 'I'll try your pretty little gun, my fine fellow; and you'll have to whistle before you get it again.'

They stood a few yards apart on the side of the hill, at a spot where it is rather steep, Joel a few paces below Jem. Suddenly, and without warning, Jem dashed forward with all the impetus he could command, and butted his head and shoulders into the stomach of Morgan. So fierce and unexpected was the onslaught that Morgan lost his footing, and rolled over headlong down the hill. Before he could stop himself Jem snatched up the stock of the keeper's gun and hurled it from him as far as he could throw it; then, taking up his own gun, gave a loud shout, and ran off, accompanied by the spaniel and terrier, both barking (so it seemed to the ears of the discomfited keeper) with immense delight. By the time that Morgan had regained his footing, and recovered the stock of his own gun, Jem and his dogs were out of sight and hearing.

Now this treatment very much enraged Joel Morgan, who

Au revoir, Velveteens!

See page

was proud of his position as head-gamekeeper to Lord Bluffborough, and was quite a potential personage; and was, moreover, a man of no small influence in the neighbourhood. Although Jem was not personally known to the keeper, he knew him by sight, and was also aware of the slight ill-feeling between his master, Lord Bluffborough, and Squire Hetherley. His first idea was to seek for Jem, and, when found, to give him, at all hazards, a sound thrashing; but as his temper cooled down and allowed him to give the matter a little calm reflection he clearly saw how unwise would be that proceeding, as it would be taking the law into his own hands, would make himself the aggressor, and certainly set Squire Hetherley dead against him. Joel knew that Emmanuel Hetherley was a man fearless in disposition, and one not to be trifled with; he therefore, after mature consideration, determined to place the full particulars of Master's Jem's conduct before Lord Bluffborough. His lordship was much incensed, as he regarded Jem's conduct in assaulting the keeper as a direct insult to himself, and as he could not call on Squire Hetherley because of the estrangement between them he went to Chilford Magna and consulted his solicitors.

In the meantime Jem had got safely away, and ere he returned to Twarley Hall called on old Betty Owens, whose son John, a fine young fellow, had 'gone and enlisted' through getting into 'a bit of trouble' with Joel Morgan. He gave both the rabbits to old Betty, much to that good body's unfeigned delight, and then proceeded to Twarley Hall, thoroughly happy and contented; pleased with himself, as if his conduct all day long had been of the most circumspect description. As he wended his way he frequently indulged in a quiet laugh at the thought of the burly keeper rolling down the hill; for that, thought he, was real enjoyment, and a sight that was far too good to be ever forgotten. But two days after the occurrence Emmanuel Hetherley received the following letter:—

CHILFORD MAGNA, *February 24th*, 18—

SIR,—Lord Bluffborough has instructed us to inform you that he intends to take action in the matter of the assault committed by your nephew on the person of his lordship's gamekeeper, Joel Morgan, which his lordship considers a direct insult to himself. Before doing so we shall be glad, on his lordship's behalf, to hear what you have to say concerning the said matter.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

FERGUSSON AND TAYLOR,
Solicitors to Lord Bluffborough.

This letter very considerably startled and puzzled Squire Hetherley, as he was quite in the dark concerning the circumstance to which it alluded. He immediately sought Jem, who faithfully, and without exaggeration or disguise, gave his uncle full particulars. The Squire, instead of being angry with his nephew, cursed Joel Morgan for being a mischief-making fool.

'Never mind, Jem, lad,' said the Squire, 'I'll go to Knighton and see my lawyer, old Phillips, and leave the matter in his hands. But I tell thee what, Jem, it is time thou went back to school, for if thou stops here much longer thou'lt get hanged, sure enough. Shoot no more rabbits, Jem, but remain quiet until thy father fetches thee away.'

One morning, a day or two after this event, Jem was roaming aimlessly, as Mr. Hetherley had given orders for the spaniel and fox-terrier to be fastened up, so that they might not accompany him in any of his lawless rambles, when he found himself in a thick copse, and heard some one whistling. The truth suddenly dawned upon his mind that he was again trespassing, and a moment's reflection convinced him that the copse was a portion of Lord Bluffborough's preserves. Not wishing to be seen, for fear more complaints might be made to his uncle, whom he was really sorry to displease, Jem hid behind some thick brushwood, from whence he descried Joel Morgan coming along with a gun on his shoulder. At the very moment that the keeper got opposite Jem's hiding-place a fox darted across his path. Instantly Joel brought the gun to his shoulder and, with unerring aim, stopped Master Reynard's earthly career, for he shot the wily animal dead as a herring. He then looked round furtively, as if fearful of the crime he had committed; but, seeing no one, he went away whistling, leaving the dead fox lying on the ground in the exact spot where it fell. Now this act of the keeper's very much puzzled Jem. Newton Brian was in the middle of a hunting district, and to shoot a fox would be regarded as a crime almost as great as the shooting of a man. This Jem well knew, as also, that if the members of the hunt became aware of the act of vulpicide committed by Joel Morgan, that individual's position as head-gamekeeper to Lord Bluffborough would not be worth twopence, as the certain result would be instant dismissal. The play, thought Jem, is not yet over, for Joel dare not leave the fox lying there. Now a happy thought occurred to Jem, for he came forth from his hiding-place, and with his pocket-knife cut off the brush and four pads, all of which he carefully stowed away in his jacket-pocket, and then retired again to his hiding-place behind the brushwood. 'Just as I imagined,' said Jem mentally, as Joel presently returned with a spade on his shoulder to bury the fox. He stuck the spade into the ground, and as he was taking off his jacket he happened to glance at the dead fox, and immediately uttered an exclamation of surprise. He then seized the fox with both hands, eagerly examined it, and saw that the brush and four pads were missing. He threw the body of the animal from him, his face became livid, and he trembled violently. The thought at once flashed across his mind that the deed of vulpicide was known, and he saw disgrace and dismissal before him. Jem enjoyed the result of his own joke immensely; but could no longer restrain his joy, for he burst into a loud laugh, which made the woods ring again, and then came from his hiding-place and faced the discomfited Joel.

'Oh, Master Hetherley, is that you?' cried Joel.

'Yes, it is,' replied Jem; 'and I say, Joel Morgan, head-gamekeeper to Lord Bluffborough, is that you?'

'Oh, Master James, don't ruin me!' implored Joel.

'I don't want to ruin you, Morgan; but how about the rabbit I shot the other day when you went rolling down the hill? Come now!'

'I'll make that all right, Master James, if you'll only promise never to say a word to a living soul as to what you have seen,' implored Joel.

'All right!' replied Jem; 'that's a bargain.'

'And,' said Joel, 'you can come here whenever you like! No one shall stop you.'

'I am going away in a few days for good, and as my uncle won't allow me to carry a gun again you may get me a couple of rabbits by to-morrow, as I wish to give a couple away.'

'It shall be done, Master James,' said Joel, and he held forth his right hand, which Jem heartily shook. He then saw a deep hole dug in the ground, into which the body of the dead fox was placed, and the turf carefully laid over, so that not a trace of Joel's crime was left discernible. Joel wished to bury the brush and the pads also, but Jem resolutely refused to give them up, but promised Joel that no one should see his trophies; with which promise Joel had to be contented, and so the keeper and Jem parted.

It can easily be imagined that Joel was pleased to hear that Jem would shortly leave the neighbourhood; and that young gentleman was equally glad to be able to extricate himself and his uncle from an awkward dilemma.

'Uncle,' said Jem that evening, 'you'll hear no more of my affair with old Bluffborough's keeper! I have seen Morgan, and I have satisfied him that no harm was meant, and he has promised to square everything with his lordship.'

This statement somewhat astonished Squire Hetherley, but Jem vouchsafed no further information on the subject, and so faithfully kept the promise of secrecy which he had made to Joel Morgan. A day or two afterwards the Squire received a letter from his solicitor, Mr. Phillips, saying that, with regard to Lord Bluffborough's complaint respecting Master James Hetherley, that he (Phillips) had heard from Fergusson and Taylor to the effect that a satisfactory explanation had been given, and therefore Lord Bluffborough was perfectly satisfied.

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

MR. F. H. AYRES, 111 Aldersgate Street, E.C., the well-known manufacturer of Lawn Tennis, &c., has just brought out a distinct novelty in the shape of a new racing game called *Sandown*, the joint invention of two of our own stable, so to speak—viz. Mr. Finch Mason and Major Welman. The new game is of a decidedly handsome, not to say Ayres-tocratic, appearance, and will be found when played at of a most fascinating nature. Our advice to those amongst our readers who are fond of backing their fancy as it flashes past the post is, to buy *Sandown* at once, if not sooner.

ADMIRABLY edited and copiously illustrated is the most recent addition to the Badminton Library, entitled '*Driving*;' and when we find amongst the contributors such well-known authorities on the various subjects that go to make up the work as the Duke of Beaufort, the Earl of Onslow, Lady Georgina Curzon, Lord Algernon St. Maur, Major Dixon, Mr. Blew, Mr. G. N. Hooper, and Mr. Alfred Watson, it is superfluous to say that the volume is of the most practically instructive character—it is, moreover, highly entertaining, bristling as it does with anecdote and quaint tales of the road. Messrs. Longmans are the publishers.

'THE ART OF SHOOTING,' by Mr. Charles Lancaster, of New Bond Street, is, as might be inferred (coming from the pen of an acknowledged expert), a work which will supply pleasure and profit even to the most skilful gunner; but to the tyro it will be found to be invaluable. Very properly great stress is laid upon 'the fit,' weight, and length of barrel; for, although 'a bad workman will find fault with any tool,' even the best can make but indifferent work with a bad, or, which amounts to the same thing, awkward one. Many important hints and suggestions are given as to the clothes that should be worn, the positions of hand, arm, and head, judging pace and angles, and the different methods of carrying and handling a gun. Instantaneous photography has lent its marvellous aid to the illustrations, with which the book is abundantly supplied.

MESSRS. LOEB & CO., of Church Alley, Basinghall Street, have just introduced a new arrangement, entitled *The Compactum Fishing Seat*, which will be found useful by sportsmen generally, and especially by tourists. It is highly finished with nickel-plated fittings, and is inexpensive; but its great recommendation is that it folds up into nine inches in length, so that it can easily be carried in a luncheon-basket or knapsack.

A VERY decided improvement upon the old-fashioned system of tying horses in stalls is the one recently patented by Messrs. Ballard & Blyth. It consists of fastening the head-collar to a head-stall rein on either side, and passing the weighted ends over a roller through the partitions of the stall, where they work within covered receptacles. This provides safety for the groom in the event of an accident necessitating the immediate release of a horse, which by this means can be effected without entering his stall. A further advantage, not only to the horse, but those dwelling over the stable, is its noiselessness, while the merits of simplicity, security, economy, and comfort, must be allowed. It may be inspected at Messrs. Barton & Ballard's, 151 Oxford Street.

'THE COMMON SENSE OF PHEASANT REARING' is ably demonstrated in a pamphlet recently issued, post free, by 'Spratt's Patent (Limited),' Bermondsey, S.E., which deals practically and in detail with the breeding, feeding, and housing of the birds. Sportsmen and keepers interested in the subject would do well to write for a copy of the work.

To ladies who live in towns, and like to take their pet dogs with them on their shopping excursions, the new *Dog-lead Walking-stick*, invented by Major Fisher and recently brought out by Messrs. Thornhill, of 144 New Bond Street, should, indeed, prove invaluable. The article in question is a silver-mounted bamboo cane, fitted inside, close to the ferrule, with a short chain and swivel for fastening to the dog's collar. When not in use the swivel, &c., is entirely concealed, and the stick, to all outward appearance, is an ordinary walking-stick. Such a clever and, at the same time, simple contrivance cannot fail to become popular, and we heartily recommend it to our readers' notice. A happy thought has just occurred to us. Why should not the sunshade and umbrella of the period be armed in a similar fashion?

"Daddles" on her Majesty's Service

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FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

'DODDLES.'

By FINCH MASON.

THEY called him 'Doddles' at Eton; they called him 'Doddles' in the regiment; every man, woman, and child that knows him calls him 'Doddles;' and 'Doddles' he'll remain to the end of the chapter. His own highly respectable surname is hardly recognised, indeed.

For example: meeting that volatile acquaintance of mine, Jack Rapid, in the club t'other day, and being informed by him that he'd just returned to town from a country house visit in Chatterboxshire, I took the opportunity of inquiring if, whilst in that part of the world, he had come across my old friend Delafield, late Captain 12th Prancers.

'Delafield, Delafield,' mused Jack, evidently in doubt; 'somehow the name seems to be familiar to me, but I don't remem——by Jove!' he suddenly exclaimed, as if a new light had suddenly dawned upon him, 'By Jove! I have it! Why you must mean "Doddles!" poor, dear old "Doddles!" Why of course I know the old man! When you talked about Delafield, don'tcherknow, 'pon my soul I didn't know for the moment who you meant. Doddles is a big man down in those parts since he left the regiment and came into his own. Dorney Court, too, is a crafty crib to stay at, I can tell you, and its owner just the same simple-minded old ass he ever was. Not a bit altered.

'They made him High Sheriff last year, bless him,' laughed Jack, 'and the tricks those fellows played him down there were something awful. Hang me if some of 'em didn't wake him up at two o'clock one morning with a message from the judge, old Sir Benjamin Blackcap, requiring his immediate attendance at his lordship's lodgings in the assize town ten miles off. Poor old Doddles took it all in, and started off express pace in his swell new carriage, attired in full war-paint—court suit, cocked hat, and all the rest of it. To make it extra pleasant it was a horribly cold night, and snowing heavily; altogether, not exactly the night for a drive.

'Can't you fancy the arrival of the High Sheriff at the door of the judge's lodgings at three o'clock in the morning? What a scene it must have been, eh? The nearly frozen John footman kicking up the devil's delight with the door knocker; the heads of the astonished neighbours all popped out of their bedroom windows all the way down the street; the frantic delight of the judge, so rudely awakened from his slumbers (I believe he threatened poor Doddles with all sorts of pains and penalties); and, lastly, the crestfallen appearance of the victim of the practical joke himself, on finding that he had had his journey through the cold for nothing. What a game it must have been! I would have given a trifle to have been there and witnessed it, wouldn't you?' And once more murmuring 'poor old Doddles!' Jack finished his glass of sherry, nodded to me benignly, and took himself off.

In the course of a chequered career, I have, I think, come across men with every variety of temper it is possible to imagine. Surly men, sulky men, morose men, peppery men, impulsive men, jolly men, quiet men, selfish men, easily satisfied men, self-conscious men; but never have I met in one of my own species, any one so completely unselfish, so mindful for the welfare of others, and so forgetful of self, so equable in his temper, such a thoroughly good fellow all round in fact, as my old friend George Delafield, commonly called Doddles. Universally popular—I'll defy any one not to like him, you couldn't help it—he was nevertheless considered a fair subject for every sort of prank and practical joke—of which the one related by Mr. Jack Rapid was a fair specimen—to be played on. He never seemed to mind in the least, but took it all apparently pretty much as a matter of course.

'You wicked wascals,' was all he would say on these occasions, when he had run the culprits to ground.

The only time I ever remember to have seen him at all put out was once during his military career, before he came into what he called his 'pwoperty,' when he was, comparatively speaking, a poor man. In a weak moment he backed a bill for a large amount for an impecunious brother officer, and that gentleman being *non est* when the time came for meeting the said document, poor Doddles had no alternative but to pay up and look pleasant. It was more than hard lines, for it was the commencement of the hunting season, and the hunters had to go up to Tattersalls in consequence of this abominable bill, thereby, of course, putting an end to poor Doddles' favourite amusement for that winter at all events. Needless to say, nine men out of ten would have cut up exceedingly rough had they experienced the same sort of treatment. Not so Doddles. He confided to me one night, over a quiet cigar, that the day the nags went up he was afwaid that he felt vewy, *vewy* bitter against his erring brother-in-arms, and that was the strongest language he was ever heard to use on the subject.

In honest truth, I verily believe that poor Doddles, in his heart of hearts, was more angry with himself for feeling bitter, as he called it, than he was with the cause of all his trouble, at that moment in all probability endeavouring to retrieve his shattered fortunes at the *trente et quarante* tables at Monte Carlo.

Well, old Admiral Delafield, our hero's uncle, died soon after this unfortunate bill transaction just mentioned. Doddles came into the property, cut the regiment, took up his abode permanently at Dorney Court, and settled down to the duties of a country gentleman, a position for which he was eminently fitted. A good man to hounds, an excellent shot, the kindest of landlords, and hospitable to a degree, it was not to be wondered at that Captain 'Doddles' was highly popular with the Chatterboxshire folk, both of high and low degree.

The ladies, of course, were delighted with him, and they were all of one mind upon one point, which was that he must be provided with a wife without a moment's loss of time. So painfully handsome, and *so* rich, it was, as Mrs. Marmaduke Matchum said, a positive sin for such a man to remain single. So, almost before my friend had settled down at the Court, the Chatterboxshire matrons with marriageable daughters went for Doddles tooth and nail—positively went for him. But it was not a bit of use. Doddles went to their picnics, their garden-parties, and entertainments generally, and danced and played lawn-tennis with their daughters in the most indefatigable manner, but nothing more. Hints—and they were given to him in shoals—were entirely thrown away upon him. That determined lady, Mrs. Moustache, who had been indefatigable in her endeavours to secure the coveted post of Chatelaine of Dorney Court for her daughter Margery, once really thought she had got her quarry 'on toast.' Getting him all to herself in a shady corner one day, at a garden-party at the Timmins's, she cleverly turned the conversation round to marriage, its advantages and disadvantages.

'They say,' sighed Mother Moustache, as the wags irreverently called her, 'that marriage either "makes" or "mars" a man. Speaking from experience, I can't help saying with the greatest confidence that the holy state far more often makes than mars. What do *you* think, dear Captain Delafield?' simpered the lady, clasping her plump white hands, and looking beseechingly up into her victim's face.

'Well, weally, Mrs. Moustache,' drawled Doddles, 'as to that I can't exactly say, don'tcherknow; but I tell you what, it strikes me vewy forcibly that mawwiage vewy often makes ma's of the women. What do you think, Mrs. Moustache?'

The defeated Mrs. Moustache, pretending, of course, to be dreadfully shocked, taps Doddles in a playful manner with her sunshade, calls him a naughty, *naughty* man, and forthwith goes off to retail the story to her intimates. After that the matchmakers gave Doddles up as quite hopeless, and for the future he was allowed, so to speak, to 'run loose.'

It must not be inferred, because Doddles was so indifferent to the charms of the many Chatterboxshire young ladies who had been trotted out for his special behoof by their enterprising mammas, that he intended to pass the rest of his days in a state of perpetual celibacy. On the contrary. Though he kept his own counsel remarkably well, so well, indeed, that not a soul, not even the lady herself, suspected the quarter in which his affections were engaged. As a matter of fact, he had lost his heart long ago, and, oddly enough, to the very last person in the world one would have credited him with having a *penchant* for.

As I have before said, good-natured, simple old Doddles was looked upon by every one as a good subject for them to poke their fun at on all occasions, and there was no greater adept at this pastime, or one fonder of the game apparently, than the fair Blanche Netherby, the only and much-spoiled child of old General Netherby of Netherby Hall. She was never tired of playing tricks of all sorts on our friend. Whether true or not, I don't know, but she undoubtedly had the credit of being the prime mover in sending him the sham message from the learned judge, Sir Benjamin Blackcap, thereby getting her victim into what he called a fearful wow.

It was unquestionably the mischievous Miss Blanche who, on a certain first of April, knowing poor Doddles was up in town, dispatched a telegram to him at his club, informing him that Dorney Court was on fire, and begging him to return at once; which he did, in a special train, only to find his home in the same condition as when he left it, and a *soirée dansante* in full swing in the servants' hall.

One of her favourite amusements, too, was engaging herself to Doddles for a dance, and then, when he came to claim her for it, to calmly look him in the face and tell him that he *must* have made a mistake. See! his name was not even down on her card! There was the card (holding it up) to speak for itself.

Doddles would gravely examine it, to the intense amusement of this frolicsome damsel, and was, of course, obliged to confess that his name was *not* there. For the best of all reasons, that it had been previously rubbed out by the fair Blanche.

He never, often as it had been played upon him, seemed to suspect the trick; if he did he didn't show it, and merely muttering, 'Dear me! I must have been dweaming!' would bow, and go off in search of a fresh partner.

Now Miss Blanche, besides being extremely fair to look upon, was an heiress to boot; therefore, it is not surprising that she had any amount of admirers at her feet. Proposals with her were as plentiful as blackberries, but nothing ever came of them, eligible though some of the worshippers at her shrine were. The worthy Chatterboxshire gossips could not make her out any more than they could our friend Doddles.

'Good looks won't last for ever, and she would live and die an old maid,' they said.

As for Miss Netherby loving Doddles in secret, and being too proud or too coy to show it, or Doddles being equally fond of her, but too shy to come forward and pop the question, that never occurred to them for one moment. Nevertheless, that was in reality the state of the case.

Blanche Netherby in her heart of hearts thought there was no one like Doddles, whilst, on his side, he worshipped the very ground she walked upon. A word from him would have settled the question at once; but it never came, for the very good reason that poor Doddles had not the pluck to say it, and I verily believe that, had it not been for the merest accident in the world, neither of these loving hearts would ever have come together.

The Chatterboxshire Hounds met one fine day at Popham Park, old Sprouter the millionaire’s place, and, as usual, was uncommonly well attended, for the great Sprouter, though a trifle vulgar, is hospitality itself, and fond of display into the bargain, so always on these occasions he makes a point of entertaining the hunt at a breakfast of a gorgeous description.

Amongst the distinguished company present (as the reporters would say) were Captain Doddles and Miss Netherby, the latter looking more charming than ever in a well-fitting brown habit, and on a new horse. Now to Doddles was usually assigned the post of pilot to the fair Blanche, and being not only a first-rate horseman, but knowing every yard of the country as well, he was, as every one agreed, the right man in the right place, and in a good thing with the Chatterboxshire the fair Blanche and her pioneer were invariably in a good place throughout, and well to the front at the finish.

On this particular morning, therefore, Doddles, all ready as usual to show his fair enslaver the way, was considerably taken aback, and, if the truth must be told, decidedly annoyed when he was calmly informed by Miss Netherby that his services this time were not required, Captain Tankerville of the Queen’s Roans, the well-known steeplechase rider, the winner of last year’s Grand Military, having kindly offered his services. Doddles detested Tankerville, a swell of the most pronounced type, whom he was wont to describe as being all teeth and hair, like a watcatcher’s dog, don’t you know, so that this perverse damsel’s choice was all the more annoying to him. However, there was nothing to be said, so Doddles very sensibly repaired to the house, and proceeded to drown dull care in a glass or two of champagne, about the very best panacea for all diseases of the mind we know of.

Now, the noble master of the Chatterboxshire hounds, the Earl of Rabbitborough, was a very keen sportsman, and not only detested large crowds, but was not particularly fond of hunt breakfasts, the latter tending, in his opinion, to attract to the meet a lot of people who probably would not otherwise come to them, and consequently demoralising sport to a great extent. A temperate man himself, with nerves of iron, and requiring no ‘jumping powder’ to make him face the large fences that abound in the Vale of Hogwash, he could not understand why people should want to set-to and 'guzzle' away, as he called it, at champagne and liqueurs at eleven o'clock in the morning.

So it came to pass that, whilst about three-fourths of the company were busy pegging away at the hospitable Mr. Sprouter's eatables and drinkables, my lord and the remainder, consisting of the picked men of the hunt, were trotting across the park, *en route* for the Home Wood, where, if the noble master was correctly informed, they were sure to find; for a fox had been seen there by Mr. Snapshot, the keeper, only that very morning. The information turned out to be accurate for once, for the hounds had not been in the covert above two minutes before it was a case of 'voices in the wood.' It was the 'ladies'' day out, and quickly the melodious notes of Barbara and Bountiful—notes that the Earl thought more thrilling than any emanating from the throats of Patti or Nilsson—proclaimed that the 'red rover' was afoot. He was a game fox, and went straight as a die through the wood and out at the bottom end without deigning to turn to right or left. Even the hallooing and tallyhoing of a lot of foot people, close to where he broke, failed to turn this gallant customer. It was the shouts of the said sportsmen on foot, and the sound of the horn, that made Doddles, who was leisurely lighting a large cigar at Mr. Sprouter's hall door, aware of what was going on. Cursing his own dilatoriness, and throwing his cigar away, he made a bolt for his hunter, luckily being led about close at hand, and, without so much as a look at the girths, jumped on his back, and galloped off to the Home Wood at a furious pace.

'They've found and gone away, but I think you'll catch 'em up, Squire,' bawled the well-pleased Mr. Snapshot, who was standing at the entrance to the covert as Doddles galloped up. 'Stick to the centre ride, Sir,' he shouted again as our hero passed through the gate best pace. Along the big middle ride as the keeper advised, and over the drop fence at the far end, and then he caught sight of the hounds for the first time. They were just topping a hill quite five fields off, the pace evidently tremendous, and not above a dozen men with them, if as many, indeed.

Cursing his luck, Doddles sent his horse along as hard as ever he could lay legs to the ground, on the off chance of a timely check enabling him to catch them up. Fast as he went, though, the hounds seemed to go faster, and consequently looked farther off than ever. He was just debating within himself whether it would not be advisable to pull up, light a cigar, and jog quietly home, when a shout coming from the far end of the field next to the one he was in, attracted his attention. Another shout, followed quickly by another, and then Doddles, taking hold of his hunter's head, drove the spurs in, and sent him along at a pace that fairly astonished the old horse. What was it that Doddles saw in the distance that caused him to turn pale, his heart to stand still, and to mutter strange oaths beneath his breath as he galloped along at a racing pace?

A girl in a brown habit vainly endeavouring to force her hunter, a good-looking bay with a wicked eye, over a fence; the horse turning round and round like a teetotum in response to the calls of his rider with whip and spur, occasionally varying the entertainment with a vicious lash out behind. Some thirty or forty yards off, alongside the hedge, and in a direct line with the girl and the recalcitrant steed, stands a large elm-tree. Its moments are numbered, for two countrymen have been sawing and chopping away at it all the morning, and it is now all but ready to fall. The two labouring men see the danger, and shout loudly. The lady evidently sees it too; but, alas, not only does her horse decline the fence, but the obstinate brute refuses to move either way.

Another moment, and the pair must be crushed by the falling tree unless they can manage to get out of the way. *Creak!* goes the elm-tree. Blanche Netherby (for she it is) hears it, and, shutting her eyes, gives herself up for lost.

In that same instant she hears the panting of a horse close to her, she feels a stalwart arm round her waist, a cheery voice says, 'All right! Miss Netherby!' she feels herself lifted bodily out of her saddle, apparently on to another horse, which immediately gallops off. In another minute the horse under her stops short, and—*crackle—crackle—crash!*

'Oh! the tree!' she exclaims faintly, and then a darkness comes over her senses, and she knows no more.

In ten minutes or so, with the aid of some water from a duckweedy little pond in the far corner of the meadow, and conveyed to the spot in one of the tree-felling rustics' hats, and with which her rescuer tenderly sprinkled her forehead, and some orange brandy from the same good Samaritan's saddle-flask, a few drops of which he managed with some difficulty to pour down her throat, the colour gradually came back to Blanche Netherby's cheeks, and at last she opened her eyes, and looked

Doddles to the Rescue!
Finch Mason

wildly around her. Was she still alive? Surely the tree—she remembered the tree, and shuddered as she thought of it—fell and crushed her. But then here she was reclining gracefully in the arms of a red-coated individual, who was kneeling on the wet grass, much to the detriment of his snowy leathers, endeavouring to pour something from a flask he held in his hand (the said hand trembled very much, she noticed) down her throat. The drink, whatever it was, made her cough, and the cavalier in the red coat promptly proceeded to clap her gently on the back, the while he murmured, as if he was soothing a child, 'Choke up, chicken.'

This made her laugh.

'Oh! it's you, Captain Delafield, is it?' she said. 'Perhaps you will kindly tell me *where* I am? *where* my horse is? *where* that very first-rate pilot of mine is? and, above all, *where is the tree?*'

'Certainly, Blanche—I mean Miss Netherby,' stammered poor Doddles; 'but, first of all, wouldn't you like just one mouthful of owange bwandy, and perhaps you would like me to help you on to your feet?'

'No, Sir,' was the reply, sending Doddles into the seventh heaven of delight; 'I *don't* want any owange bwandy, as you call it, and I *don't* want to get on my legs—at least, not just yet, for I'm very comfortable and happy where I am—you see, it's such a fine, bright day, isn't it, Doddles—Captain Delafield, I mean?' (Poor Doddles nearly dropped his fair burden at this point.) 'And now, Sir, answer my questions. Where *am* I, to begin with?'

'Well,' said Doddles, 'you're at this present moment in the middle of a grass field belonging to Farmer—Hi! Tummas or Jarge, whatever you answer to,' addressing himself to the two tree-fellers who were hovering about, 'whose farm's this, heh?'

'It be Muster Jowlekins's varm, zur,' replied Tummas.

'You're in a field belonging to an agwicultuwist named Jowlekins,' continued Doddles. 'Your horse, not being quite such a fool as he looks, wan away exactly one minute before the twee fell, and was pwomptly caught by Tummas yonder, who is now leading the bwute about. Your pilot is, I twust, at this moment at the bottom of the Sousham Bwook, and I hope he'll stay there. I only wish I had him here,' exclaimed Doddles, looking positively vicious; 'I'd tell the giddy captain pwetty fweely what I thought of him in his cawacter of pilot to a lady.

The twee you were good enough to ask after, has, at last—succumbing to the united axes of Tummas and Jarge—fallen, never to wise again. Good old twee!' said Doddles, feelingly.

* * * * * *

The rooks were going home, the wood pigeons were flocking to their snug fir-trees, the pheasants might be heard ascending to their perches, the cock birds, as they did so, giving utterance to a little crow, as much as to say, 'Good-night to everybody;' and the sky just above the horizon was streaked with purple and yellow, all denoting that the winter's day was drawing to a close, when two equestrians, one a gentleman in a red coat, and the other a lady in a brown habit, might have been seen riding up the avenue leading to Netherby Hall.

Though the evening was decidedly chilly, not to say cold, the pair were going along at a foot pace. Not only that, the gentleman in the red coat had his arm round the waist of the lady in the brown habit, and the head of the lady in the brown habit nestled in a confiding sort of way on the shoulder of the gentleman in the red coat. The lady was the first to break the silence.

'Doddles, darling,' she murmured (the lady in the brown habit's excessively pretty mouth by this time was uncommonly near to the blonde moustache of the gentleman in the red coat), 'Doddles, darling, a sudden thought has occurred to me.'

'What is it, my own?' was the reply.

'Why, it has just struck me that when we are married, Doddles, your friends will all call me *Mrs.* Doddles, Doddles.'

'Let 'em,' said Doddles.

THE CITY ON THE ICE.

By WILF POCKLINGTON.

YOU have never heard of the City on the Ice? Well, there are many who have not. Come up and spend Christmas with me, and I will give you some good sport among the ducks and fish, and also show you the City on the Ice, which has not its duplicate in the world.'

The speaker was Charlie Denman, a man who had made a good deal of money in the lumber trade, and who now lived retired, near Bay City, Michigan, on a hillside that overlooks the site where Gabriel, the lover of Evangeline, made his camp.

Accordingly, as the old year waned, I made my way westward to Michigan, to find the sedges of the Saginaw River alive with birds; and the river itself laden with ice three feet thick, while Saginaw Bay, a vast body of water, many miles in extent, was frozen hard as solid ground. Of the sport we had with the duck in the sedges, or the rabbits and foxes in the open, this article will not treat, but will confine itself to the City on the Ice, which is situated on Saginaw Bay every winter, being located about the middle of October, and breaking up about April, when it vanishes in a day like magic, or is swept out to the inland sea of Lake Ontario in a sudden break up of the floes.

The birth of its somewhat idyllic name is not known, but it is derived from the fact that the fishermen of the cities along the Saginaw River congregate in the bay every winter in their curious movable houses, and by sheer numbers establish a fair-sized city on the ice, with a population of from two to five thousand.

As soon as the ice in the Saginaw River is strong enough to bear a sleigh, a number of strange-looking vehicles may be seen moving between its banks. These are the houses of the fishermen, measuring about ten feet long, by six feet wide, and seven feet high, and they are fixed upon two runners like those of a large sleigh, and are drawn by dogs along the ice from place to place, many of them coming from great distances along the river and its tributaries to the rendezvous in the Bay. Wives, families, and sweethearts are all left behind for many months, and in some cases for ever, the casualties being large every year through the carelessness of the men, and numbers are drowned, frozen, lost in a blizzard, driven out to sea, or devoured by gray wolves, which frequent this part of the country in large numbers. The weather up here is very cold, often falling to forty below zero for several days at a time, and great snow storms occur that place several feet of snow on the level in a single night. The fishermen lay their houses side by side, not in streets, but in circles and squares (there being many divisions and coteries), and as these are constantly varied in shape by the restless proclivities of the owners of the houses, the city never twice presents the same sight.

I went to it day after day for many weeks, and never seemed to grow weary of its infinite variety. The men are brawny and muscular, and during the summer remain at home with their families, and hunt ducks for a living. On the ice it is difficult to tell one man from another, owing to the fact that all dress nearly exactly alike, adopting a kind of uniform suitable to the climate, and very picturesque. The costume consists of a pair of bright red mackinaw trousers, which are nearly an inch thick, made of a coarse woollen material resembling the coarsest stuff used in cheap horse-blankets; the shirt is of the same material, but of a bright blue colour, and the waist is girdled by a bright red woollen scarf; the black or gray stockings are as thick as the shirt and trousers, and the boots are a species of Michigan lumber boots, coming up to the knee, and having large spikes on the soles and heels; the usual head-covering is a broad brimmed felt hat, in shape like a cow-boy's, or, when the weather is very severe, a kind of woollen hood, fitting close to the head, is worn, making the men look like Esquimaux. Attired in this picturesque dress, the dweller of this ice city presents a curious sight to a stranger, upon whose thin clothes and voluminous wraps of fur they look with disdain and contempt.

The houses are built of rough pine, and having a slanting roof might easily be mistaken for a lean-to wood shed, or a large dog-kennel, in which there is one small door, hinged with two pieces of leather, like a boy's rabbit-hutch. The interior, occupied by the fisherman and his one or two dogs, is cosy and warm. It contains a box for a seat, a rude stone fire-place, or perhaps a small stove, and a bed like a sailor's bunk, composed of boards and blankets, a sort of shelf being just above it, on which rests a bar of soap, plenty of tobacco, several corn-cob or clay pipes, a tin plate and cup, a knife and fork, some salt and pepper, some ink and paper, and a pen or two, a roll of wound rags, several very old newspapers, and some boxes of cheap sulphur matches. From the roof dangles three or four chunks of good bacon, a small bag of flour, and innumerable festoons of fish lines—thick twisted ones—capable of playing a fifty-pound muscalonge or tarpon. On the walls are prints out of newspapers, and quaint carvings done by the owner to pass away spare time. One of the huts this winter attracted great notice by being papered inside with the cuts appearing in Fores's Sporting Magazine, which I gave the owner, and which he speedily arranged in curious frames made of black paper, twisted and pinched into various designs, and then fastened on the wall of his house, round the pictures. The various phases of English sport portrayed awoke considerable interest, and I was always in demand to tell yarns describing them.

The floor of the huts is covered with planks ; this is both for comfort, and to prevent the fire from melting a hole ; in the centre, just by the side of the bed head, is a square opening like the entrance to a cellar, cut in the boards, which, being fitted with a handle, can be lifted up when desired, and then will disclose a small square hole cut clear through the thick ice. In this lid are a number of holes, through which pass the fish-lines, so that the floor is always intact, and it is safe to move around without the danger of falling into the hole. The lines have their hooks baited, and are dropped with heavy sinkers attached into the water, and the wooden trap-door closed ; the ends of the lines are attached to queer little three-legged twigs, which are cut from any bush or small tree ; these are placed upon their three legs, and when a fish is hooked, its struggles pull the twig over on its side, and so give notice to the fishermen. These are called 'tip-ups' and are in universal use in ice fishing. The fisherman lazily lays on his back on his bed, and reads the old papers, or any letters he may receive, every now and again casting his eye at his 'tip-ups,' and when necessary leaning over and drawing up the caught fish, or re-baiting the hooks. The dogs as a rule are very intelligent, and watch the 'tip-ups' quite as assiduously as their masters, and when a fish is caught they pounce upon the line, and if the door of the hut is open, will run out, drawing the line taut, until the fish is at the surface.

For the storage of the fish caught, large tanks are cut into the ice, being about two feet deep, having a small hole bored through the ice to admit a constant supply of fresh water to the fish, but so small that no fish can escape through it ; these tanks are covered by a slab of ice, and are large enough to contain one to two hundred fish. By this means the fish taken are kept alive and in good condition. The varieties generally caught are the giant perch, silver whitefish, pickerel (3 in. to 4 in.), pike, sand-pike, giant sun-fish, bass, muscalonge, cat-fish, sturgeon, eels, and bull-heads.

Twice every week a large flat-bottomed scow, or barge, placed on runners, and drawn by eight horses, comes from Bay City, calling at each hut, collecting all the fish, paying so much per pound for it in the lump (except where some phenomenal take has occurred), and returning home, the fish is shipped to Detroit, Buffalo, and the East. Private consumers and local dealers fetch their fish from the Ice City as they need it. The fish are plentiful, and bite easily and well, so that good wages are made by the men in this careless lazy way, the money made running from three to ten pounds a-week per man, according to his luck and the work he does. Many of those who earn the larger wages go in for 'flagging,' that is, they make a number of holes about the bay, and have as many as fifty lines out at once; to each of the 'tip-ups' of these is attached a bright-coloured flag made of flannel or silk, and the owner is kept quite busy running from one to the other with his hand sleigh. Wednesday or Thursday are the busiest days at the 'city,' for then the fish scow comes in, and the visitors from the mainland usually take advantage of the auction of fine fish held on that day.

Sunday is an off day; what little fishing is done is more for the benefit of visitors than for the actual catch. On this day the dogs drag the houses around for the occupant to make his calls; he does not leave his house; and every here and there in the city will be found a dozen or so houses all grouped together in a ring, the owners sitting on their boxes having a social reunion and chat. Some of the men are musicians, and have an instrument of some kind along, and others, possibly of a Teutonic stock, will organize a glee club, and over the clear, frosty air, will come ringing the quaint characteristic melodies only heard in the backwoods and the lumber camps. And they are sweet and full of sympathy, but they need the free open air, the smell of the bursting pine bud to be appreciated; none but a Vandal would endeavour to transplant them to the drawing-room or concert.

This gathering together is called 'clustering,' and if the day is moderately calm, open-air games are indulged in; the favourite game appears to be a kind of 'tag,' in which they dodge from one hut to the other. It is curious to see men finding so much amusement in the now nearly extinct games of the English boy. When it rains, the huts are 'clustered' still closer, and one of the party relates a story, or reads from a paper or book, each one remaining in his own hut. There is scarcely a day that large numbers of visitors do not visit this city, which seems to possess a strange attraction. Some come in the large ice-yachts that go skimming over the frozen surface, taking no heed of cracks nine feet wide, but flying over them at a rate of forty miles an hour; others come in sleighs, or on skates, many of the large sleighs accommodating forty passengers.

The huts are fastened at their stations by means of a wooden peg passing through the hind part of the runner into the ice, and a common practical joke is to withdraw this peg, and tow the unsuspecting somnolent inmate some miles away from the city, and so astonish him when he awakes. In the sudden and fierce storms which descend without warning upon these waters, many houses are blown loose from their stakes, and driven before the gale like a piece of paper. Then it is that the casualties come on ; if they are blown out many miles, and a heavy snow falls, the dogs cannot drag the house back over the snow ; and food failing, the unfortunate fisherman starves to death, unless rescued by some of the ice boats that come out in search of him.

In the stretch of water extending between Saginaw Bay and Lake Ontario, are situated three islands, called the Charity Islands. These are inhabited by a few of the Kohkahlin tribe of Indians, who subsist on hunting and fishing. To these islands the fishermen make their way before an expected storm, and it is no uncommon thing to see the whole city moving *en masse* in that direction. Year after year many of the fishermen are lost, but no experience seems to make them wise. The profit attending the bay fishing is so great, and the work so easy, and the good times so many, that, instead of clearing away when the first symptoms of the ice melting appears, they hang on and on until the frail ice gives way beneath them, or the floe breaks, and they are driven helplessly into the great lake before the force of a great storm. Some of these reach the lake, but many are crushed between the cakes of ice as they 'pack' or rise upon one another in the straits between the bay and the lake. All along these straits the country people light large bonfires directly the ice begins to go out, and have organized parties of rescuers to catch the houses as they drift past, and so get the occupants to shore ; many scores of men are thus saved every year. It seems as if it would always be so, unless legislation compels them to quit the ice before a certain date, and that is not likely.

When the greater portion of the ice has gone out, and the river becomes navigable, large boats, fitted up with every appliance and convenience for restoring life, and carrying a competent doctor and nurses on board, steam out into the great lake, and often spend two weeks searching for the unfortunate men who have drifted out, and who are frequently recovered in the last stage of exhaustion. One of these boats is called the

Music, and is a large tug, having an enormous propeller, that was built for the purpose of towing the great million dollars rafts of lumber. Owing to her stout build, and the great power of her engines, she is eminently fitted to cruise about among the loose ice, at a high rate of speed, in search of the lost ones. All night a large electric light is carried at her peak, and eager lookouts are on the watch day and night for signs. When recovered in many cases, the poor fellows have been so reduced that they have eaten their dogs, and even the leather hinges of the door of their huts. It will scarcely be credited in England that, although every one along the Saginaw is perfectly well aware that these things happen every year, no one takes any very great notice of them, and even the local press regards them more as everyday occurrences, to be dismissed with a brief mention, rather than as an item of news.

One of the men who had been saved by the *Music*, gave me the following reminiscence of the occurrence :—

'Signals had been hung out, of the ice above the bay moving, but I did not think it was coming down for another week, and wanted to make the most of my time, as fish were biting freely. On the third day, as the sun sank, dark clouds were hanging along the horizon, and I looked to my stakes with more than usual care. I went to bed, however, and slept soundly. I was awoke by a jarring and rocking of my bed, and jumping out, I opened my door and found, to my dismay, that the ice in the bay had broken up, and that the piece my house stood on was not more than thirty feet square. Judging by the stars we were moving along at about ten miles an hour, and soon the bay was crossed and the river entered. Bonfires were blazing along the banks, and several houses that floated nearer the bank than I was were reached by the ropes thrown them by the country people, and slowly but surely drawn to the side. I was beyond the reach of the ropes, and my only hope was in running on the Charities, to which I was being carried in a direct line.

'Day now broke, and just as my piece of ice neared the shore of the first island, another large cake jammed in front of me, and slewed me off into mid-stream again, and there was no help for me but to enter the great lake. I had food enough to last me three days, and was equally beset by two dangers; one was the being carried out too far into the lake to reach the shore if another hard frost set in, as it often does, and the other was the current carrying me too far into the lake for the *Music* to come for me. Four days passed, and having no food, I killed my poor dog and eat him. On the tenth day I gave up all hope; I was starving, had no fuel for my stove, and turned in for warmth, never expecting to be saved. Next morning I fancied I heard a hail, but was too weak to move. I do not remember any more until I recovered consciousness on board the *Music*, where there were eighteen other fishermen all rescued that trip. I am here again this year, and I expect will be every winter while I live. One forgets a danger when it is past.'

That is the general sentiment, and when one sees the picturesque city and its gaily clad, stalwart men, one forgets to think of its dangers and perils. In the summer one thinks less still of it; the vast bay is like a sheet of rippled silver under the bright sun and balmy breeze, and the hunter sighs in anticipation at the sight of the 'butterball,' the 'whistle-wing,' the canvas-back, the teal, the mallard, the grey and the black duck, the red-headed duck, and the many others that at the end of the close season people its waters. The City on the Ice is an experience not easily forgotten by one who has seen it, and is probably, as my friend said, without a duplicate in the world.

A MASTER STROKE.

By 'LEATHERHUNTER.'

TO each art there's an age in the annals of Time,
When its votaries pose on a height so sublime,
Little hope is reserved for the toilers below
Mortal man towards Olympus much further may go.
Thus with Raphael, the brush, and the palette, they say,
And with Phidias sculpture of old, had its day;
But we moderns, I trow, to the Fates owe our thanks,
For some prizes they've left us to balance the blanks.
Those same ancients a match at the Oval ne'er saw,
Nor by telephone talked to a mother-in-law;
They knew nought of a meerschaum, went short of a weed,
And they hadn't *The Field* or the *Pink 'Un* to read;
The great art of umpiring—of that they knew nought:
'Twas reserved for the era of Property Short.
In this line he the premier honours may claim—
The main point in umpiring is *winning the game!*

Look how extras tell up at the end in the score,
And how troublesome 'bats' can be out 'leg before,'
If your umpire's a Short, and can aid you at need—
Not a man of the Parr or the Carpenter breed.
Melton score-sheets can tell how this famous umpire
Oft a match that seemed hopeless pulled out of the fire;
Till at length, with long practice, so skilful he grew,
That when Short was umpire our reverses were few.
And 'tis sad to relate how at last it befell—
Like the pitcher he went once too oft to the well.
With a 'win' or a draw we had ended each match,
But were destined one morning a Tartar to catch:
'Twas the close of the season, when Uppingham came,
With a team that was strong at all points of the game;
While as usual the Melton in trundling were strong,
But in batting their 'tail' was too weak and too long.
We commenced operations at twenty past ten
With the 'toss,' which went wrong for the Uppingham men;
And the railway time made it convenient to fix,
In the evening, on seven for 'drawing the sticks.'
With the wicket all right we elected to bat,
And one Uppingham man made a bid for 'the hat;'
But the third, a neat bailer, was no use at all,
For old Property baulked him by crying 'No ball!'
Then that bowler indulged in some figures of speech,
Such as sailors are said the 'poll' parrots to teach;
And he sent down such teazers our wickets to floor,
He disposed of the lot for a paltry fourscore,
Which was sadly too few, for the Uppingham men
Made a gallant reply with a hundred and ten.
Our next venture proved better—two batsmen got 'set'—
Without losing a wicket we wiped off the debt;
When the visitors' turn came again to go in,
They just needed a hundred and twenty to win,
And old Property, plus some six flagons of stout,
Felt *quite equal to dealing with cases of doubt.*
But the Fates were against him, for never a 'tip,'
Not a 'snap' at the wicket, at long or short slip,
Was referred to our hero; no man 'leg before'
Gave a chance of controlling the Uppingham score,
And the wags kept inquiring what Short was about—
But if no one appealed he could hardly say 'out.'
As the clock marked six-thirty the prospect grew queer,
For 'the hundred' went up with an Uppingham cheer;
They'd two wickets to fall: it seemed bad for our side,
All the bowlers we had in the team had been tried.

Though the scoring was slow, still our captain looked grave,
For he felt there was only one thing which could save
This last match of the season, and that without doubt
Was the stroke of the clock ere we'd played it right out.
Surely on went the pointer, and so did the score,
Till at six fifty-five they but needed one more.
The excitement grew painful: at every ball
The non-player 'backed up' on the chance of a call
From his partner; at last they determined to try,
And by dint of hard running they stole a 'leg-bye.'
'So they beat us?' No! reader, just get the report,
And you'll find that old Property bellowed, '*One Short!*'
His decision was final—that's cricketer's law—
So the Uppingham match after all was a 'draw.'

'IN THE LAST STRIDE.'

A County Steeplechase.

By H. S. Lockhart-Ross.

I NEVER was better carried in my life, and I don't believe there's any horse in this district good enough to show Challenger the way over the steeplechase course next month.'

The speaker was young Harding, the son of the M.F.H., and besides him there were half-a-dozen more of us gathered together in the smoking-room of Fullarton Hall, the hospitable owner of which, Sir Thomas Harley, was entertaining a good-sized house party to celebrate the event of his silver wedding.

We had all been out hunting that day, and had come in for a really first-class run. As usually happens, in the evening every one was narrating his marvellous adventures to any one who cared to believe them, the said adventures being well embellished with additional striking details invented on the spur of the moment, and in a great measure owing their origin to the potency of our host's whiskey toddy. This is pretty well the way everywhere. I know I have often opened my eyes in amazement at hearing any small adventures of my own related to a third person by my companion in them. The thrilling scenes you have acted in, and the hair-breadth escapes you have had by field and flood, when thus forcibly retailed by a really good talker, who has the knack of carrying his audience with him, interest you with all the charm of originality, and make you feel a pleasant glow of satisfaction at the mighty deeds of prowess you have unwittingly performed.

Just now young Harding was holding forth about the virtues of his bay horse Challenger, which had certainly carried him in a wonderful manner over a very stiff country, and as we had had a fast thirty minutes without a check, and he had succeeded in cutting down the whole field, he was proportionately proud of the performance.

However, it gets a little wearisome to hear too much about another fellow's horse, especially when you have been doing your best to outride him all day without success, and I was, therefore, delighted when Fitzgerald, another man staying in the house, took up the running, and said,—

'Yes, that's a good-looking horse of yours, Harding, and he certainly performed wonderfully well to-day with you, but I don't quite like his style of rushing his fences, and, as regards pace, I fancy I have a mare at home that would hold him pretty well at most distances.'

This put Harding's back up a good deal, as he fancied himself a great authority upon horseflesh, and for any one to say that his favourite hunter was not a perfect fencer irritated him considerably. But he couldn't very well say all he thought, as Percy Fitzgerald was almost a stranger to him, his acquaintance dating from the previous day. Fitzgerald was the son of an old friend of Sir Thomas, and had only recently come back from a cattle run in Australia to spend a year or so in the old country. He had been staying down at the Hall for about a week with me, and I had taken a great fancy to him, as he was one of those quiet unpretending young fellows who are more given to acting than talking. Indeed, I was somewhat surprised when he commenced to discuss the merits of Harding's horse; but he was pretty well up in his subject, as he had been all his life among horses before going abroad, and now, on the Australian run, he had plenty of opportunities of keeping up and adding to his experience. His father was a squire in a neighbouring county, and had been in years gone by a brother officer of Sir Thomas, as they had once served together in a light cavalry regiment; but he had long since left the service, and developed, like his old comrade, into a country gentleman, with a great idea of farming and agricultural improvements.

Young Fitzgerald appeared to me to be spending a very considerable portion of his time at Fullarton Hall, where there existed for him a strong attraction in the person of Miss Harley, the only daughter of the worthy baronet. She was a vivacious brunette of about four-and-twenty, and seemed to be by no means indifferent to the marked attentions paid her by the handsome, sunburnt young Australian.

'Well,' said Harding, at last, 'if you fancy your mare so much, Fitzgerald, why don't you enter her for the Hunt Steeplechases down here, and give us an opportunity of seeing her form. You would have plenty of time to get her fit, as there are three weeks yet, or, as you ride about the same weight as I do, we could at all events make a private match of it, if you don't care about entering for the steeplechase.'

This proposal found great favour with all of us, especially our host, who dearly loved a sporting match of any sort; but Fitzgerald didn't seem very keen about it, and hung back most unaccountably. I was surprised at this, as he wasn't the sort of fellow to swagger about his own mare if she hadn't been a real good one, and I knew he could ride above a bit, as I had seen him out in the hunting field three or four times in the last week, and yet he began making difficulties, and appeared to be unwilling to enter for the race.

'You see,' said he, 'the mare is down at my father's place, and, although I have hunted her pretty often this season, yet she would have to go through the mill regularly before she was fit to start in a three-mile steeplechase. And then I am moving about a good deal just now, and shouldn't be able to see to her training myself, which I ought to do if I am to ride her, as she is rather a nervous creature, and wants careful handling.'

'I'll tell you what, Percy, my boy,' broke in Sir Thomas, 'you just telegraph for your mare to be sent down here, and make this your headquarters till the event comes off. You can do your training down here far better than in your own part, as this is the sort of country you will have to ride over. If your father will spare you for so long a time we shall be only too pleased to have you, so we'll consider that a settled affair, subject to his approval.'

I had been watching Fitzgerald's face while the baronet was getting out his hospitable harangue, and it lit up at once at the prospect of spending three weeks more at the Hall, and I was, therefore, not at all surprised when he accepted Sir Thomas's offer with eagerness, and, changing round at once, expressed his willingness to enter his mare for the steeplechase, or to make a private match of it with young Harding, or to do both if they liked.

This led to a good deal of desultory conversation as to the terms of the match and so forth, and as to whether the private race should be before or after the big event, or on a separate day. At last it was finally arranged that both competitors should enter for the steeplechase, and that the private match should be settled by the relative positions in which they finished in this race. That is to say, as far as these two were concerned, the other competitors in the big race should not be counted, and should be considered non-existent for the purpose of determining the winner of the private match. Of course if either of them managed to win the whole affair out and out so much the better. This plan seemed to meet with every one's approval, as it saved the horses from being knocked about in two races instead of one. Another point yet to be settled was whether they should ride for any stake, or only for honour, a compromise being made by them arranging to put down twenty-five guineas each to be expended in a fifty-guinea silver cup for the winner. Settling all these preliminaries took some considerable time, and it was well into the small hours of the morning when the smoking-room conclave broke up and we retired to rest.

At breakfast next morning Fitzgerald was somewhat late putting in an appearance, and the subject of the steeplechase had been well ventilated before his arrival. On entering he was greeted by every one at once with a variety of questions, an amount of attention from a long table which would have made a bashful man yearn for a rotten plank in the floor to open suddenly and deposit him on the next level. But Fitzgerald, though quiet, was by no means shy, and he took all their chaff very composedly, and set to work at his breakfast with the utmost coolness. I noticed that when he got his coffee from Miss Harley he asked her some question in an undertone, to which she replied in a laughing affirmative, and he seemed as pleased as possible, but what he had been driving at I couldn't guess. As most of us were going off that morning we were all talking about the steeplechase as if it were the event of two or three days off instead of as many weeks, and as our hospitable host had invited us all to come back for the races, we were discussing the chances with all the eagerness of those who intended to have a small book upon the event. Indeed, some little memorandums were already being pencilled down to avoid the accident of a short memory. Some one had started the question of colours, and I said, 'What are your colours, Fitzgerald; shall I order them for you as I pass through town? It will save you the bother of writing about them.'

The young Australian directed an inquiring glance towards Miss Harley at the end of the table, and she replied promptly, 'Oh, I'll see after Mr. Fitzgerald's colours for him. As he will be training at our stables I am bound in honour to supply the Fullarton Hall jockey with his colours.'

She brought this out so naturally that it sounded quite unpremeditated, and Fitzgerald, of course, overflowed with thanks and gratitude; but I shrewdly suspected that this little matter of the colours had been arranged between the two in that short consultation over the coffee. This confirmed my suspicions that the prospect of staying at the Hall for three weeks was of much greater importance in Fitzgerald's mind than the fact of whether or not he happened to win the forthcoming steeplechase. Still he wired for his mare Empress to be sent down at once, and, from what I had seen of him, I fancied he would do his best to win, even although his chief endeavours were directed to winning a race of a very different description.

I was invited to return two or three days before the races so as to see the final preparation of the mare who was to carry the Hall colours, and I was very glad of this opportunity, as it adds considerably to the interest of a race when you know anything about the previous trials of one or more of the competitors. When I came back to the Hall in a few weeks time my first visit was, of course, paid to the stables, and, indeed, I should have had no choice in the matter even had that not been my own inclination, as in my absence they had all gone racing mad. Nothing was spoken of but horses, and Sir Thomas, who had brushed up all his old racing slang for the occasion, was in great form.

The old gentleman was most energetic, bustling about and giving his orders with as much pomp and ceremony as if he had under his charge a string of half-a-dozen starters for the Grand National. But his single one was very good to look at, and I must confess that when I saw her moving with her rider up I was very much taken with the pair. Empress was a bright chestnut, about sixteen hands, with a stocking on her near hind leg, and, although a bit nervous and irritable, she seemed to be on very good terms with her rider, who had beautiful hands, and looked a workman all over. I was so favourably impressed by what I saw that when I came back to the house to lunch I was as badly bitten by the racing fever as the rest of the party, and when shown the silk jacket, primrose with claret sleeves, made by Miss Harley herself, I was ready to invest my last sovereign upon the Hall favourite. But there was no one there with whom I could speculate, not even in gloves, for all the other visitors were of the same mind as myself, and, had they not been, I verily believe it would have been as much as their visit was worth to have been discovered by Sir Thomas in the crime of betting against Empress.

The eventful morning came at last, and I must say I envied Fitzgerald his coolness. After breakfast he loafed about with Miss Harley in the conservatory and garden just as if he had nothing before him all day long instead of being booked to start off from the Hall at one o'clock sharp for a five-mile drive to the racecourse preparatory to riding a three miles' steeplechase against the best riders in the country. The ground itself I had inspected on the previous day. It was twice round a very fair steeplechase course with partly natural and partly artificial jumps, the biggest of which was the water-jump over a good big brook of running water about twelve feet wide, with a stiff artificial fence about four and a half feet high in front of it. The next biggest jumps were two others each about five feet high with a six-foot ditch on the take off side guarded by a miniature post and rails. These three obstacles had all to be negotiated twice, the finish being opposite the grand stand, and the start at the corner just beyond. The remaining jumps were of the usual description, and the whole made a course of about three miles of stiff hunting country.

Punctually at one o'clock the drag came round, and Sir Thomas, taking the ribbons, bundled all his party on to the roof with most commendable celerity, and off we set for the scene of action. It was a lovely day, and every one seemed pleased to see our party, as the baronet was a universal favourite, and when the Hall drag drew up on the racecourse crowds of friends came round to welcome the party and wish us success. We had a very good position opposite the grand stand, and only a short way below the winning-post, and, as the ground was somewhat elevated on this side, we had a capital view of the whole course, which was oval-shaped, the big jump being exactly below us, on the opposite side to the winning-post.

There were about a dozen horses entered on the card for the steeplechase, but out of these only seven intended to start. Of course we all went round to the paddock to see the horses stripped, and pass our final criticisms upon the event, and a very pretty sight indeed was the parade in the bright sunshine, for we had been favoured with a perfect day for the meeting. The six opponents of our mare were all present, the pick of the lot being Challenger, who looked as fit as hands could make him, and he found many admirers. The pencil fraternity established him a strong favourite, Empress and a big-boned brown horse belonging to one of the officers from the neighbouring dépôt being the next best in their opinion, while the other four had no particular price of their own, but just anything you liked. They were all four good-looking horses, but hadn't got the breeding of the other three, except perhaps a wiry-looking grey, which was not known in the district at all, and had all the possibilities of the unknown.

Just before we left the paddock to look after Empress and her jockey, young Harding came along surrounded by a crowd of admirers, and looking very confident. He had put himself in as thorough training as his horse, and he said he was now riding ten pounds lighter than he had ever done, a fact he seemed very proud of, as I heard him tell it to three people in as many minutes. In order not to worry our mare, as she hated strangers, only Miss Harley, Sir Thomas, and myself went round to see her with Fitzgerald, who was still as cool as possible, and didn't look a bit bothered or anxious. In fact, I rather feared that he was taking the whole thing a great deal too coolly. I heard him tell Miss Harley that he hoped to win, and would do his best, and that whatever happened he knew Empress would do the same, as she had never been going better than the last few days. We saw her saddled, and then went back to join our party on the drag to see the preliminary canter.

Down the straight and over the hurdle the whole seven come, and then the ring gives tongue, drowning all conversation, and proving that there really is a good deal of speculation over the big race of the day. Although I can't talk I can use my eyes, and I notice just above the peak of Fitzgerald's yellow cap a loose favour of primrose and claret, and on my right hand I notice an exactly similar one in the front of Miss Harley's frock. Fitzgerald hadn't it on in the paddock, and whatever doubts I entertained before about his keenness to win the race I am now certain that under all that quiet manner he means business. As he passed he looked up at our drag, and just touched the favour with the end of his whip, at which my right hand neighbour waved her hand to him, and pointed to her own rosette.

Now they are in position, and a sort of hushed awe prevails over the whole ground and the ring, which a few moments ago was a babel of sound. The seven horses face the starter; at least, six of them do, since the grey obstinately refuses to look at him at any price, and swerves round suddenly the instant the line commences to walk up. This occurs several times, and every one's patience is getting exhausted. Fitzgerald then said something to the starter, and he spoke to the other riders, who, appearing to consent, the following plan was tried. The objectionable grey was placed at the starting-post, only facing the wrong way. As the other horses then walk up in line a capital start is effected, as the pig-headed grey, seeing them approach, swerves round as usual, and, taking the bit in his mouth, bolts off at top speed in what he is pleased to imagine is the opposite direction he is wanted to go. As a matter of fact, although he doesn't know it, he is leading the whole field, whom the brute evidently fancies are trying to stop him and turn him round the other way. Next to the grey comes the big brown, whose rider in crimson is a conspicuous object. Then follow two of the outsiders who are stable companions, with Empress and Challenger close behind, the primrose and claret of the former being just in front of the light blue which is worn by Harding. Another local horse acts as whipper-in to the lot.

As soon as the race was well started, I rushed off down to the water as fast as possible in order to get close to the big jump the first time round. By the time I got there the leading horses were just coming down to it, the grey still in front of the brown, while the next two are being rapidly overhauled by Empress and Challenger. As the grey approaches the water I notice that he doesn't carry his head as if he meant business; and although his rider is doing his best to get him in hand again, I can see that he is simply running away with him. Just before he reaches the flanking hurdle he catches sight of the water beyond the fence, and swerves violently to the right,

The Greek leads the Field.
Finch Mason

see page 178.

bolting clean out of the course, and very nearly upsetting me into the bargain. The big brown clears the jump in gallant style with a little to spare, and close behind him came the two stable companions, who both get over pretty well, though one of them drops a leg into the brook as she lands, but is cleverly recovered by her rider after a scramble. Now comes Empress's turn, Fitzgerald sitting like a rock and keeping the chestnut well in hand. She pricks her ears forward as she sees the water, and rises like a bird, clearing the whole affair beautifully ; but just as she lands, Challenger, who had come up with a rush and taken the jump at a slight angle, cannoned against her sideways, completely upsetting her and knocking Fitzgerald out of the saddle. He fell upon his right arm with considerable force, but kept his hold of the reins, and Empress was up again in an instant. Harding had managed to keep his mount on his legs after a staggering scramble, and had just got under weigh again as I rushed forward to help Fitzgerald. I picked up his whip and gave him a leg up, but to my astonishment he refused the whip, saying as I gave it him, 'Thanks, don't need it now ;' and he was off directly in pursuit of the leaders, swinging his feet into the stirrups as he went. By this time the last horse had also got over the water, and was now making a good race of it with Empress, which seemed to encourage our mare to shake herself together again. The whole accident, although it takes some time to describe, had only taken a few seconds in reality ; and although, of course, the others had secured a commanding lead, yet Fitzgerald was by no means out of the running, as his mare seemed going strong and well, and there was another two miles still to be negotiated.

Getting back to the drag as quickly as possible, I got my glasses out and surveyed the position of affairs. By this time the horses were just passing the judge's box for the first time, the crimson jacket still leading on the brown, the two outsiders a short way behind, followed in turn by the light blue of Harding. Then came Empress, who by this time was closing up again. The other outsider had come to grief and retired. Owing to this unfortunate accident the three leaders had secured such a start that, if they could only continue at their present pace, they would be pretty certain to fight out the finish between themselves without letting the other two horses have a look in at all. But there is a mile and a half yet to be got over, and one of the two stable companions appears to be tiring. The other does not look like a stayer, but the soldier on the brown looks dangerous.

Now comes the big fence, a quarter of a mile from the water jump. Over it like a flash goes the crimson jacket, and away he sails, still holding the pride of place. The next horse is evidently blown, and, refusing badly, lets up his stable companion and Challenger, who take it almost abreast, but the latter has the longer stride, and the outsider tails off, being rapidly overhauled by Empress, who is now going magnificently. In breathless expectation I watch her as she approaches this jump, for I feel that upon the way she negotiates it the whole issue depends. If she has had her wind knocked out of her and jumps short there will be no hope of her managing the water successfully a quarter of a mile further on, and then the last chance will be gone. I breathe again as the mare takes the jump in faultless style, but I wish I could say as much for the rider. He sat firm enough, and seemed to ride resolutely at it; but then I could see he was only holding his reins in one hand, and, in fact, seemed to be leaving everything to his mare to manage in her own way. This was all very well as long as she jumped as freely as that last time, but how about the water and the other big fence yet to come? I suppose I must have looked anxious, as a small hand is laid upon my arm and a voice says close to me, 'Percy will win, won't he? do tell me what you think? Oh! he must win!' I turn round, and see Miss Harley almost crying with vexation at seeing her champion still last. I don't know what I answered—something encouraging, of course; but afterwards I remembered that 'Percy'—not Mr. Fitzgerald or Empress, but Percy forsooth! I shall be very much surprised if very shortly young Fitzgerald doesn't take home to his father a different Empress to the one he wired for three weeks ago.

By this time the leader has got over the water, closely followed by Challenger, who now takes the jump more calmly. But in the quarter of a mile of grass between this and the last fence the positions of the horses have altered considerably. The long swinging stride of our mare shows to immense advantage here as she collars the remaining outsider and glides past him without any visible effort. The two leaders also are coming back to our chestnut mare, so now for the first time the primrose and claret is lying third, with a possible chance of being well up at the finish. Everything now depends upon how Fitzgerald

Hurrah! Safely over!

see page 181.

gets over the water, since the other two are safely across, while he is still upon the wrong side of it. I watch the performance narrowly through my glasses, and am absolutely trembling with excitement. I cannot make Fitzgerald out. He is still riding with only one hand, in as casual a manner as if he were merely larking across country. Now he reaches the water. Surely he will take hold of the mare's head and steady her. Not a bit. Just the same careless way as before, with his right arm swung across his breast anyhow. Now she is rising at it; will she do it? I strain my eyes at the primrose jacket till everything looks yellow all around for some seconds. Yes, hurrah! safely over, and in hot pursuit of the brown and bay. Only one more big fence, then two or three small ones, and then the run in.

They are still in the same order over the big fence, but close together, the brown horse a couple of lengths ahead of Harding on Challenger; while Empress is closing up fast, and is now only four lengths behind. The last jump is taken by the two leaders almost simultaneously; they are both tiring fast, and there is nothing to choose between them as they come up the straight. The race seems to lie between one of these two, whichever can stay the longer, for Empress can hardly get up in time now. But all the same, the chestnut mare is going magnificently, and Fitzgerald must surely have great confidence in her powers, as Harding and the soldier have both taken up their whips and prepared to ride home in earnest, but Empress's jockey is still sitting quiet.

Crack! crack! go the whips in cadence with the stride of the horses, and we can almost feel the rush of the galloping hoofs on the ground as a couple of hundred yards from home Challenger gets a lead of a length from the big brown horse. But they are both coming back to Empress, who collars the soldier in the next fifty yards, and rapidly gets on terms with the leader. Now she is up to him, and has closed in the gap between them. Still gliding up, the head of the chestnut mare is only just in rear of the light blue jacket which is working so energetically on Challenger. She is at his girths now, but cannot get any further. Yes! another effort and the mare reaches his neck. Harding is doing all he knows with whip and spur to stave off defeat. Fitzgerald has no whip, but with white set face is making play with his spurs. If he had only taken the whip I offered him he could just manage to force her head in front.

As they flash past us the primrose and light blue, the bay and the chestnut, seem inextricably mingled together. Only a few strides more and we cannot tell what is happening. And above and through all the excitement comes the roar of the ring, rising louder and louder. 'The favourite wins! the favourite wins!' 'No, Empress! Empress! the chestnut has it!' 'No, Challenger! Challenger!' 'Empress!' 'Challenger!' 'Empress!' 'The mare wins!' 'No, the horse!' 'The mare!' 'Yes, the mare, by a head!' We are afraid to speak, or even look at each other, till we hear the result. Hurrah! we *have* pulled it off after all. Fitzgerald just managed to shoot Harding's horse on the post, and the judge's verdict is 'Empress by a head!'

Sir Thomas and I immediately went round to the weighing-room to congratulate Fitzgerald, but found the poor fellow in a dead faint, and in the hands of a surgeon, who was setting his right arm, which was broken between the wrist and elbow. With undaunted pluck he had absolutely ridden two-thirds of the race with a broken arm, which must have given him excruciating pain at every fence he negotiated. This, of course, was his reason for refusing to carry his whip when I offered it to him after his fall.

At dinner at Fullarton Hall Fitzgerald, with his arm in a sling, was the hero of the evening, and the ladies one and all showered their attentions and sympathy upon him. Sir Thomas, who like all old-fashioned gentlemen is fond of speeches and toasts, got up just before the ladies left the room and said he had two toasts to propose, and two only, the first being the health of Empress and her rider. Fitzgerald, of course, had to reply to this, which he did very modestly, ascribing his success to the fact that Miss Harley had made his colours for him, which had brought him good luck, as it was bound to do. As a token of his own and his mare's gratitude he begged Miss Harley to honour them both by accepting Empress for her own use.

This brought the worthy baronet upon his legs again, saying that he was commissioned by his daughter to accept the magnificent present with gratitude; and he himself wished particularly to know whether the mare was good in double harness. 'By the by,' concluded Sir Thomas, 'this reminds me of my second toast, for which I must ask you all to fill bumpers. Empress's late owner is going to have a try at running in double harness as my son-in-law, so, ladies and gentlemen, drink to the health of the bride and bridegroom to be—my daughter and the winner of the County Steeplechase.'

TATTERSALLS, PAST AND PRESENT.

By 'H. H.'

IF there is one spot under the sun where the sport of the world and those interested in it may be said to be focussed, that spot is Tattersalls. The M. F. H., the ordinary hunting man, the breeder of blood stock, the racing man pure and simple, the 'whip,' the lover of smart hackneys—all find their way there at some time or other during the season, and rub shoulders together. Nor in the summer is it very difficult to pick out the fashionable jockey, the huntsman, or whip, easily known by their neat attire and trim appearance, either up to see the stud sold or to meet some M. F. H. to settle terms about a place for next season. The stud groom of years and character who allows his master to ride, not what horses he may prefer himself, but what his lord of the stables considers should carry him on any particular day. The road coachman, as distinct a specimen of the *genus homo* as either of the others, and less frequently the body coachman of some titled lady who can take her state carriage to drawing-room or reception through the crowd to a hair's breadth, or put her down at the opera house without sign of jar or jolt. The smart tiger is there also, as is the good man gone wrong, who from having once filled either of the above-mentioned posts, is now glad to pick up a precarious living by taking horses to the station, running errands or messages, or, in short, doing any other odd jobs that his hand finds to do. A perfect world in itself is the yard at Tattersalls—a microcosm in which is reflected all that takes place in the larger universe of sport beyond its walls. For a generation now have we been able to watch both events and men beneath the shade of the historic cupola in the centre, and strangely do the remembrances come back on our brain at times. Let us recall some now, for Mr. Somerville Tattersall has only just commenced business in the rostrum, the horses are of little note so far, and the company sparse and thin ; so that we may for a space supply their places with figures that have been and are not.

A glance, though necessarily a brief one, must, however, be cast back beyond the last quarter of a century to the old corner ; and, alas ! how few are those becoming who can remember it !

Some are still amongst us of those who figure in the print which hangs in the present office, but how many have departed of the old turf-world magnates, who were wont to foregather on the pleasant lawn and 'square their books,' or lay fresh wagers in the early days of the week in which a great race was to be run. Lords Glasgow, Exeter, Chesterfield, and George Bentinck, General Peel, Admiral Rous, and Messrs. Wilson, Batson, Greville, George Payne, and Osbaldeston, are names that would at once occur to those who are now living as having been the giants of their youth; while Lords Queensbury, Foley, Barrymore, and Messrs. Panton, Vernon, Mellish, Bunbury, O'Kelly, *cum multis aliis*, come to mind as those of earlier days who would have been found there. Here it was that Sir Felix Agar performed one of the greatest feats of coachmanship that was ever attempted. 'He made a bet,' Nimrod tells us, 'which he won, that he would drive his own four horses in hand up Grosvenor Place, down the passage into Tattersalls' Yard, around the pillar which stands in the centre of it, and back again into Grosvenor Place, without either of his horses going a slower pace than a trot.'

Here also it was that the two men who had the greatest mastery over horses the world ever knew, each in their peculiar line, met for the only time—viz., Assheton Smith, who could ride horses in the front rank over a country that most men could not ride at all, and Rarey, who taught us that the most savage horses in the world could be rendered not only amenable to reason, but harness. This is how the *Druid* described their meeting:—'In June, 1858, a few months before his death, Mr. Smith was in Rotten Row, and at Tattersalls on Blemish; and when he rode into the ring one morning and saw Rarey driving his zebra round it, he made his servant bring his horse alongside, and quite gloried in showing the celebrated American how he could still change horses in a run without dismounting.

But old-world stories are not to the taste of the present day, and we must get back to the time succeeding the great dinner at which the then members of the firm were entertained at Willis's Rooms in 1865, on removing to their new place of business, and recall the faces we have personally seen within its portals.

Perhaps none do we miss more than that of old Dighton, the artist, who used to make such clever thumb-nail sketches of the *habitués*, for which he charged a couple of guineas when enlarged and slightly coloured. Without what would be called artistic merit they gave not only the likeness, but the character of the men pourtrayed in a wonderful manner, and very probably, in the first instance, suggested the idea of the portraits that are now so popular in some of the London society papers. He was a perfect sleuthhound in following his man when he had marked him down (they were all taken unknown to the sitters, or rather standers), and never left him, let him go where he would, until the sketch was complete, so that we once heard a stranger ask if he was a 'tip-staff,' that he was following a man about so persistently.

Another well-known character was Davis, the one-legged man, said to be either a brother or cousin of the renowned huntsman to the Royal buckhounds who was always to be seen, and at one time was by profession what was then known as 'the guinea man.' These, however, were only the every-day frequenters of the yard —men that could be seen there any day and every day when horses were being sold. Let us dismiss them, and call up in our mind's eye the more select occasions when the *élite* of the fashionable as well as the sporting world is to be found congregated around the rostrum, when in those days the senior partner, the late Richard Tattersall, long since departed from this sublunary world, was sure to be seen presiding as the afternoon drew on. Many of those also who have for years now been regular attendants at Albert Gate know him not, or only by tradition, yet it was worth standing by to hear him when Mike led something good up to the box and placed it under the wall, so as to show to the greatest advantage. Short and almost sharp in his sentences, and altogether businesslike, and if not so persuasive in his manner as his cousin and junior partner, Mr. Edmund Tattersall, no keener critic of horseflesh ever took hammer in hand, or possessed a quicker eye to catch a bidding as he looked over a crowd of eager, upturned faces.

Quite in his glory was he when 'Milward Monday,' as the Druid termed it, came round in each recurring May, and on the Monday before the Derby the sixteen-stall stable was filled with the little fourteen two cracks sent up year after year by the Squire of Thurgarton Priory. Very smart were they as a rule, and of course right in every respect even to the last hair of their tails, so that men who had money to spend without limit, but neither time or perchance knowledge to pick what they wanted out of the dealers' stables, could come here and bid in all confidence, sure of having a park hack or harness pony that would do them justice, and not cause them to enact the part of laughing-stock amongst their more horsey friends.

They relied on the Nottinghamshire gentleman's judgment, and came prepared to pay for it. Doubtless they were right, as very few indifferent animals did he ever include in the sixteen, selected regardless of trouble and expense from all parts of England. True we have seen a Duncan there to lower the average, but then, on the other hand, we have also seen Renira, by Fingal, sold at 155 gs., and the chestnut, Miss Chatty, make 250 gs. in 1874 to raise it to a higher level. This mare, a daughter of Alamode, was bought in the year before at 150 gs., then sold at the Wakefield Agricultural Show to Mr. Kendal, and afterwards bought back again to make the top price at the next sale, when Mr. Ridler bought her. The thin, spare form of Mr. Milward himself was always to be noted in the desk beside Mr. Tattersall on these occasions; but, alas! since 1877 Milward Mondays have ceased. His best string at any rate was when those enumerated above were sold, and the last three lots fell off in quality; and, as a judge of ponies, no one has arisen to catch his mantle. A few have tried it, as for the last six years Mr. Weston has sent up a stud, but they are more polo ponies, and of a different stamp altogether, of which we shall speak later on.

Sure to be near the upper end of the yard on such occasions was our old friend E. Corbett, the horse painter, most genial of companions at the ring-side, either Middle Park, Acton, the Islington Royal, or the great Yorkshire show, where for many years we were wont to compare notes with him and his brother, 'Castor,' for years editor of the *Sporting Magazine;* but the latter has, like so many more, passed from amongst us, and of the artist we have heard nothing for years, and know not if he is still in the land of the living.

Another old friend also who never missed these reunions was the Rev. Champneys Minchin, perhaps on the whole better known in sporting than in evangelical circles, and you might have laid strong odds on Tattersalls against Exeter Hall as a safe draw for him. In his young days he was a rare man to hounds, but of late years devoted himself more to driving than riding, and was one of the first, if not the very first, to discover what a show hollow-backed horses, properly bitted and caparisoned, made in harness. His grey and dark chestnut were for years one of *the* pairs of the King's Road, Brighton, and few men knew more about harness and driving generally than he did; but then he was the friend of Captain Cooper, Mr. Blake, and others of the school who brought driving to the front once more after it was supposed to have died the death.

Near him, to a certainty, you would find that fine old sportsman Mr. Frederick Heysham on his annual trip to town, of whom Nimrod wrote, and who could number seventy-five years or more between the first time he met the Hampshire hounds at Bramdean Common and the last.

We have never noted a real live bishop bidding for one of these little horses *in propria persona*, but have seen men of such different lines of life as Mr. Irving, Captain Machell, Mr. H. Padwick, and Lord Headfort, nodding away for dear life at one sale; while at another their places have been occupied by Sir George Chetwynd, Lord Boyne, Mr. Robinson, Lord Calthorpe, Mr. T. T. Drake, and Lord Fitzroy, besides others of note which do not occur to us at the present time of writing.

Having now glanced at the sales of hacks, we may turn to coach horses. A look in the yard would reveal to us at once when a good lot was up. First to catch our eye in all probability would have been the late Mr. Chandos Pole, of Radbourne Hall, near Derby, so intimately connected with the Brighton Road, of whom the coachmen used to say, 'He's not an amateur, he's one of us, and knows all the "ins and outs."' With him to a certainty would be seen Mr. A. G. Scott—Sir Coaching Scott, as his friends used to call him—still happily with us, though so many of his friends and associates have taken the long journey; while if Captain Cooper ('Billy Cooper,' on the road) was not with them, he would assuredly be in conversation with Colonel Stracy Clitheroe, George Meek, or, perchance, the Duke of Beaufort, 'Cherry' Angell, Colonel Maude, or some other of the *coterie* of whips whose numbers now, alas! are so thinned. We well remember Captain Cooper giving a cool three hundred for the beautiful skewbald Columbia, so named from her markings resembling the Stars and Stripes, to run as leader in the Boxhill coach, although she was soon withdrawn from the work as being too valuable to use. Colonel Chaplin and Lord Bective might be seen looking over a likely one together, and Mr. Charles Hoare could scarcely help being to the front. Mr. Walter Shoolbred would recall the glories of the Guildford Road, which he had rendered so popular, and Lord Arthur Somerset, the present Duke of Marlborough, or Mr. Seager Hunt, would remind us of the last Boxhill venture; Mr. J. Bailey, or Sir Thomas Peyton, recall the 'Windsor,' which in turn brings up Dr. Hurman, the most genial of companions either on the box seat or in the hunting field, and Mr. Stewart Freeman's name would stand good for several different roads and ventures, as did the cheery face of the late Jem Selby, who took first rank amongst the professionals. It is of course years since Tedder left the scene, but our eye may yet chance to light on Charles Ward, Hubble, Fownes, the Thorogoods, &c. &c. Long may it do so, for the sport is one of the most harmless as well as enjoyable that can be indulged in during the summer, and gives pleasure to thousands who without it would never realise what sylvan beauties are to be found just beyond the range of the London smoke.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

A Tale of the Turf.

By 'Fusbos.'

THE date of the opening of our story is the day before the Derby some fifty years ago, and the numerous backers of the favourite are wondering in their own minds whether 'Corinthian Tom' (that is the horse's name) will see the post; for his owner, old Ben Hexter, commonly called 'Uncle Ben,' the well-known hell-keeper of the Haymarket, is stricken down with severe illness, and is at this identical moment hovering 'twixt life and death at his house in the Kennington Road. Will old 'Uncle Ben' last over to-morrow? is the question asked by every one interested in the great race, including those more immediately connected with the colt.

It is four o'clock in the afternoon, and Frank Hexter, the old man's only son—a fresh coloured, good looking man of thirty or thereabouts, attired in the somewhat flashy style of dress affected in those days by sporting men—rose from a chair at the sick man's bedside, which he had been occupying for the last two hours, and went on tip-toe to the door in answer to a knock he now heard. A man about his own age—though his grave and somewhat careworn looking face made him look older—

and rather shabbily dressed, noiselessly entered the room, and, silently shaking him by the hand, walked without a word to the bedside. It was the doctor.

He stood looking at his patient for a minute, and then, taking the chair lately occupied by Frank Hexter, stooped low over the invalid, the while he passed his hand over his heart. The next instant he was on his legs again, and went across the room towards the window, where Frank stood anxiously waiting for his report of the sick man.

'Well, doctor, what news?' inquired he, in a hoarse whisper, his nervous, excitable manner plainly showing the suspense he was labouring under. 'He has been sleeping for some time now as peacefully as a child. He's better, don't you think? He'll—he'll last over to-morrow, eh? I know you can pretty well tell—come, now! yes or no.'

'No.'

'Nonsense, man!' gasped Frank, staggering backwards as if from a blow; 'you surely don't mean it's so bad as that? Why, the old man was pounds better this morning; took some champagne and brandy mixed, as you suggested, at noon, and afterwards talked quite like himself for a bit. Knew every one of us, too! The last he said to me just before he dozed off to sleep was, "Well, Frank, my boy, how's the favourite to-day?" You *must* have a reason, though! What is it?'

'Come here, and I will show you:' and the doctor, taking him gently by the arm, led him to the bedside, and drawing aside the curtains so as to admit some light, pointed silently to the inmate's face.

'*Dead?*' exclaimed Frank, with a convulsive start.

'Aye, *dead!*' was the grave reply.

The doctor, without another word, drew the sheet over the dead man's face, and closed the heavy velvet curtains round the bed; whilst his companion, muttering beneath his breath, 'Poor old father!' sank down with an air of dejection into an adjacent armchair, and, burying his head in his hands, for some moments appeared to be oblivious to all but his own thoughts. At length he broke the silence of the death chamber.

'Doctor,' he said, 'this is a bad job—a very bad job—for all of us.'

'My dear Sir,' began the doctor, soothingly, 'you must have guessed—nay, known—that your——'

'Oh, yes, I know all that!' interrupted the other, with an impatient gesture of the hand; 'of course, I was as well aware as yourself that my father could not have lasted many days longer. It was not to be expected that a man of his age could long survive such an attack as he had. What I meant when I said that it was a bad job for all of us was, that could you have kept him alive another day it would have made all the difference in the world. A difference of some fifty thousand pounds, indeed! What do you think of that, doctor? Sit down, and I will explain, for I see my words have puzzled you. I'll lock the door first, though, if you don't mind.'

Suiting the action to the word he rose, bolted the door, and, once more seating himself, proceeded with his promised elucidation of the mystery.

'To-morrow—as I daresay you know, doctor—is the Derby Day. What has that to do with the case in point? no doubt you will say to yourself. Well, only this, that my late father owned and—unfortunately, as it has turned out—nominated the first favourite, 'Corinthian Tom,' as he is called. Had the colt in question been nominated by any one else—myself, for instance—all would have been right, but as it is, the rules of racing are, that when the nominator of a horse for a race dies previous to the event taking place—two minutes before will do the business—all bets are off, and if the horse ran and won by the length of a street he would be disqualified. Now do you understand?'

'I know nothing whatever of racing, or its laws and regulations,' answered the doctor; 'but I think I understand this much, that had my late patient survived until to-morrow evening his horse—'Corinthian Tom' I think you said his name was—would have run for the Derby in due course. As it is, he won't. Am I right?'

'To a T!' was the reply.

'He would have won, of *course?*' remarked the doctor, with somewhat of a sarcastic expression creeping over his grave countenance as he emphasised the last word.

'If ever there was a certainty in this world for a big race, this was one,' replied the dead man's son, in a tone redolent of disappointment. 'Two to one *against* him, indeed!—why, it was a hundred to one *on* him, if they only knew! Oh, doctor, doctor!' groaned he, 'it's a grievous disappointment—it is, indeed!' And, sorrowfully shaking his head, he once more buried his face in his hands, and rocked himself to and fro in an agony of despair.

For nearly ten minutes neither spoke, and the dead silence was only broken by the tick—tick—tick of the clock standing on the mantelpiece. Suddenly the young man started to his feet, as if struck by a sudden impulse, and, drawing his chair close to that of the doctor, addressed him in a tone of voice only just loud enough to be audible to his listener.

'Doctor,' he whispered, 'an idea has just occurred to me that, if carried out properly, will pull us through yet. It will want your assistance, though; and it is, of course, for you to say whether you will give it or no. Anyhow, I believe you to be a man of honour and integrity, and whether you agree to help me or not, I am certain you will treat what I am about to propose in strict confidence. I am right, am I not?'

'Here's my hand on *that* much, at all events,' was the straightforward reply, the doctor, as he spoke, holding out that member, which was warmly grasped in return by Frank Hexter. 'And if,' he added, 'I can see my way to assisting you by any means not derogatory to myself, you can rely on me most certainly. I can't say more than that, can I?' said he, kindly.

'You're a good fellow, doctor, and no mistake!' was Frank's reply, as he once more shook his friend warmly by the hand. 'And now,' said he, 'listen to what I have got to say. In the first place, not a soul, either in the house or out of it, with the exception of my wife, must know of my poor old dad's death. On the contrary, it must be given out all over the place that he is very much better—likely to last for some time, in fact; though, of course' (here Hexter stole a sly glance at the doctor), 'any sudden excitement—such as hearing that "Corinthian Tom" had won the Derby, for instance—might have a fatal effect. There will be endless inquiries, no doubt, to-night, from pressmen and others anxious to hear the latest news of my father's health. There have been, in fact, for some days past, I can tell you. So I think an assuring bulletin written by you, and fastened on the front door, will have a good effect—that is, of course, if you agree.'

Frank Hexter, anxiously scanning the doctor's face, discovered a grave look upon it that he hardly liked.

'Well, then, we come to to-morrow, the Derby Day, the day that is to make me a man or a mouse, as the saying is. My father, when he was first taken bad, told everybody that if he was not well enough to go to Epsom himself to see his horse win (for he wouldn't hear of his losing, poor old chap), he'd be sure to be at his bedroom window to see his friends drive by, so that they might give him a "jolly" as they passed. This got into the papers somehow or another, and the consequence is that everybody, high and low, will be on the look out for a sight of the poor old man to-morrow evening, and if they don't see him at the window as he said they should—why, they'll never believe that he's alive.'

'It's very certain,' remarked the doctor, 'that they *won't* see him, however much they may look.'

'It's very certain,' hissed Frank, looking steadily in the other's eyes as he spoke, 'that they *will* see him, and they'll see *you* on one side of him, doctor, and my wife on t'other, as well; I myself shall have to be at Epsom, of course. There's no help for it, doctor; it's the only thing to be done. You'd be the last man in the world to ruin me, I know—and I say again, it must be done, and you must help me. When "Corinthian Tom" has won the Derby—and he will win, as sure as I stand here—the news will be brought to this house straight from Epsom by a man on horseback, who will have orders to gallop all the way. Hacks will be stationed at intervals along the road, so that there will be no excuse for delay. The excitement of the news must *kill* my father—you understand—and you will give a certificate to that effect, of course. If things go as they should do, and the ring settle on Monday all right, I will hand you a cheque for ten thousand with all the pleasure in life. In any case, I will write you one payable to bearer, for a thousand, now this moment. Nay, my dear Sir, I insist upon it.'

And, in spite of the doctor's remonstrances, Frank went to a side table, wrote the cheque out, and handed it to him, saying as he did so, 'Now then, doctor, I've unfolded my plan, and made you my confidant—I'm at your mercy, in fact. Take five minutes and think it over.'

Crumpling up the bank draft in his hand, the physician walked to the window and looked out, evidently deep in thought and sore perplexed. At the end of the specified time he came back. His face was pale, and he could hardly speak for emotion.

'Listen, Mr. Hexter,' said he. 'First, I have a wife and children, whom I adore; secondly, I am devoted to my profession, and very ambitious; thirdly, I am as poor as a rat, and likely to remain so, for my practice, confined as it is principally to the needy ones of this world, is of necessity by no manner of means a lucrative one—consequently, if I earn enough in a year to keep myself and mine going, I may account myself a lucky man. The thousand pounds you have just been generous enough to give me won't do me any harm, you may depend upon it; the ten thousand you are good enough to promise me if "Corinthian Tom" wins to-morrow will make my fortune.'

'I am to understand, then,' said Frank Hexter, joyfully, 'that you accept my offer?'

'I can't resist it, and that's the honest truth,' replied the doctor.

And so the pair shook hands on the bargain.

* * * * * *

The Derby won by Mr. Benjamin Hexter's chestnut colt, 'Corinthian Tom,' was a celebrated one in the annals of the Turf, and the various incidents in connexion with it were long after the subjects of fireside and taproom gossip. How Pierce Egan and other writers gloried in retailing all the details of the race in the flowery language peculiar to the sporting scribes of that era! The start from different points of the metropolis; the scene in front of Mr. Hexter's house; the mob cheering 'Uncle Ben' as he sat at his bedroom window wrapped up in a blanket and drinking port wine—they distinctly saw him drink a glass of port wine, no doubt to the health of the gallant 'Corinthian Tom.'

Then the race itself, won by the favourite by the shortest of heads, after the most tremendous finish ever seen; and, the final scene of all—the doughty knights of the pen fairly revelled in this—viz., the sudden death of poor old 'Uncle Ben' at the very moment that the news of his horse's victory was being announced to him. Oh! it was indeed a great and glorious time for the Turf gossips!

The robbery, for robbery it undoubtedly was, was never laid bare, for the very good reason that such a thing never once entered the head of a living soul, with the exception of an obscure person named Parker, a dresser at Guy's Hospital, who had obtained a holiday for the day, and spent the best part of it smoking his pipe in front of 'Uncle Ben's' house, or staring up at the windows. In the course of the evening he aired his opinion very freely in the taproom of the 'Baldfaced Stag' in Kennington Lane.

'I've sheen a good many *stiff'uns* in my time!' hiccupped he;

'but, s'elp me, I never see sech a stiff'un as the old covey I seed a-settin' at his—hic—winder in Kennington Road this—hiccup—mornin'!'

It is a somewhat remarkable coincidence that shortly afterwards the respectable Mr. Parker took service with Dr. —— in the capacity of butler and general factotum; and as he accompanied the physician when the latter removed from Lambeth way, and settled down in a fashionable street in the West End of London, it is presumed that he gave satisfaction. He invariably invested a ten-pound note on something for the Derby every year, and the gentleman that always did the commission for him was none other than that dashing bookmaker, Mr. Frank Hexter.

SIR RICHARD SUTTON.

By 'A Quornite.'

THERE was joy in dear old Leicestershire, deny the fact who can,
When we ranged its verdant confines with Sir Richard in the van;
We'd the run of all the spacious plain from Donnington to Quorn,
And through all the country where to-day Sir Bache doth wind his horn.
In the princely stalls at Quorndon and at Thrussington there stood
An array of fourscore cattle famed for beauty, bone, and blood,
While the hounds had gained in symmetry till only Belvoir Hill
Showed a finer lot on flagstones, or more likely for a kill.
'Twas the time when noble Forrester at Belvoir held the sway,
And Sir Richard oft would join both packs and to Will Goodall say,
'I would like to see you hunt them, Will; I'll act as whipper-in,
And we'll count "first out of covert," though I stand small chance to win.'
There are heads still shown in lordly homes erst borne by foxes grand,
That had lived for hours to fall at last before the rival band;
When they clashed by chance at Owthorpe there was not a single horse
But was ridden to a standstill ere they killed at Cotgrave Gorse.
But the patience of Sir Richard as a huntsman best was seen
In the four hours' run that ended with a kill on Denton Green.
They had found their fox at Cossington, and run to Denton Hall,
Over thirty miles from Quorn they found themselves at evening fall;
For Sir Richard at the Castle soon a well-horsed coach was found,
While Jack Morgan and the Trueman lot at Knipton ran to ground.
Cried Will Goodall, when he reached his home, his well-earned rest to seek,
'There is nought in all this world I'll swear to beat Jack Morgan's cheek:
Runs right o'er our choicest country, ends a rasper with a head,
Then he coolly comes to Knipton and demands his board and bed!

But we'll broach the oldest barrel, boys, we'll make the rafters ring,
In the hope as stout a fox one day may us to Quorndon bring.'
They'd a 'high old time,' the truth to tell—they kept it up till morn;
Morgan didn't beat his record on the morrow with the Quorn.
But we never found a fox that would their courtesy repay,
Though we'd planted coverts specially for runs out Quorndon way.
It was said the Belvoir foxes were of true old Tory breed,
That to shun the 'Rads' of Loughb'ro' was a portion of their creed.
Munday's Gorse and Walton Thorns were dear, but that ne'er failing hold,
The delight in days long vanished of our founder, Meynell bold,
The old tangled gorse at Scraptoft, was most dear to Sutton's heart;
For its wild wold foxes travelled far whene'er they made a start,
And 'tis meet I tell my readers the proceedings on the day
When they brought to hand a gallant fox that lived out Scraptoft way.
This same fox had beat Sir Richard in grand chivies half a score,
He was soon afoot and went the pace—a sound one to the core;
But our hero lived just long enough to bring to book at last
This 'old thief' who'd preyed so long among the poultry in the past.
It was Friday, and the fixture of the Quorn was Barkby Hall:
They soon finished with their first fox, then at Scraptoft made a call,
For said Sutton, 'At my fav'rite gorse a gallant fox doth live,
And to that same fox, Will Butler, we'll another gallop give.'
Well, it wasn't many minutes ere the melody arose,
And another forty minutes brought this matter to a close,
For they killed him in the open half a mile from Beeby Wood.
Cries Sir Richard, 'What a glorious run! this day has done me good;
Though I'm forced to go to London, I will try to join the Quorn
When they meet in Ratcliffe village at eleven on Tuesday morn.'
Tuesday came, and at the fixture a grand gathering was seen,
It was like the gallant muster that once met on Rolleston Green,
For we knew what mournful errand took Sir Richard up to town;
But we never drew a gorse that day: the fatal news came down
That grim Death had claimed our hero, that his bonny steeds fourscore,
Faithful Glider and the Trueman lot, would hear his voice no more;
So we sadly turned our horses' heads for home that Tuesday morn—
We'd no heart for weeks to join the chase across the fields of Quorn.

PALPABLE HITS.

By CUTHBERT BRADLEY.

WILLIAM SPRIG, or Billy as he was more frequently called, though young was ambitious, and having an inborn taste for sport, and being the possessor of a gun the derelict of a late uncle, he longed to take the field and his place as a shot. 'Everything comes to him who waits,' and we find Billy one fine Monday morning perusing a note of invitation from a neighbouring sporting divine, one of the old school, who, alas! are fast becoming as extinct as the dodo or the warming-pan. The welcome epistle ran thus: 'Dear Sprig, come and help me to eat a bit of venison on Tuesday next, at one p.m. sharp. Thine ever, R. Blowhard.' Billy, delighted, decided immediately to air his new shooting toggery, so drove over that very morning to accept his reverence's invitation, and took with him his gun with the view of getting (if possible) a shot on the extensive glebe-land.

The whole country side recognised the sterling good qualities of that fine old sportsman, the Rev. Samuel Blowhard, incumbent of Levington-cum-Lotion, with hamlets and glebe attached. Whether in the field shouldering his gun, or in the pulpit beating his cushions, a better instructor than his reverence could hardly be found. The Rev. Samuel's method of drilling a young cub was to begin by taking the change out of him, just to see what he was made of, and whether he was all bark and no bite. He was, at the same time, much addicted to chaff, and if a youngster would not take that, he had to do without the corn and other good things.

Of late years the depressed condition of agriculture had compelled the Rev. Samuel Blowhard to turn his attention to farming, because the glebe had been thrown on his hands. But the whole concern was a source of annoyance to him, for directly he sold a hunter to advantage, the money had to go on the farm to keep things together. The very sight of his own cart-horses with their slow lumbering gait at last became distasteful to him, and in disgust he had more than once threatened to seed the whole place down with Sutton's grass, grow thoroughbreds, and make it the best bit of hunting country to be found anywhere out of Leicestershire. At this critical point a young fellow turned up, having more money than ideas, and possessed also of a delicate wife, for whom the doctors ordered country-air, new-laid eggs, and chicken-broth. Him the Rev. Samuel persuaded to take the glebe on a long lease, with a mutual arrangement about the shooting.

A lunch at the parsonage was, of course, necessary to mark so happy a termination of troubles and worries. Feasting, in order to celebrate any special event or auspicious occasion, is so essentially a trait of our national character, that it has been said by a humourist that if an earthquake were to come and upset the world, and two Englishmen only survived the disaster, the first thing they would do would be to look for a smooth place upon which to lay a table-cloth.

Hence Billy's invitation as one of the guests to eat venison at the parsonage, and thither, as we have said, he at once hied after an elaborate toilet, and with a great desire that his smart shooting clothes might fetch his reverence.

'Good mornin', good mornin' to you!' said the Rev. Samuel from the chicken pens to Billy, as he smoked his morning pipe and contemplated his poultry, 'you look very flourishing this mornin', bin killing a pig lately?'

'Not much; fur and feathers are more in my line than bristles: there's no sport like shooting!' replied Billy, with conscious pride in his appearance, and failing to catch the playful meaning of his reverence's allusion to pig killing, as a sign of affluence.

'Well, you look in good feather, anyway; strike terror into them when they see you comin' with the weapon!'

'Are there many birds about the place this year?' persisted Billy.

'Best show I ever had; come and have a stare at the cocks and hens, if you ain't afraid of damaging yourself,' continued his reverence, who meant chaffing poor Billy to his heart's content.

'Oh, I've come out for sport this morning,' said Billy cheerfully.

'You won't get much, I'm afraid, in my chicken-pens, but I can show you some of the finest table birds you ever saw off a dish.'

'Oh, I thought you were speaking of partridges!'

'What, then, have you taken out a license this year?' pursued the Rev. Samuel inquiringly.

'Yes, I've got a license, but not anywhere to shoot,' replied Billy, more hopefully, for he thought he had worked his reverence very successfully up to the point of an invitation to shoot.

'Because it wouldn't do, you know, to shoot without a license,' said his reverence, shaking his head.

'Oh, I've got a license right enough, and gun and ammunition.'

'Well, if you have got a license,' said old Samuel, thoughtfully, 'you'll find written on it that you may shoot game anywhere in Great Britain and Scotland, so why don't you walk into the nearest field and chance meeting a hare or a keeper. You know I've let the shooting on my glebe.' Poor Billy's face lengthened several inches.

Having enjoyed his victim's consternation, and completed his tour of inspection round his chicken-pens, his reverence bethought himself that he would move our young friend, as he didn't intend him staying lunch that day, the venison feast being on the next one.

'Well, well, we will see what we can do for you,' said the Rev. Blowhard; 'we will just walk round the estate, and see if there is anything to aim at.'

Billy was delighted, and proceeded to cram his pockets full of cartridges from a box that might have held half-a-dozen or three hundred. The terriers Brevet and Sting were whistled, and with the boot-boy and his reverence the party marched round one field in great expectation, without doing any execution.

The next field looked more promising, with great patches and tufts of grass, and the two terriers flew about like lamp-lighters, and seemed very busy at every tuft. But as they were as liable to point mice or tit-larks as any larger game, there was no knowing what might not get up.

Billy seemed to expect something, and started prancing and looking about, quite on the *qui vive* with his gun. The terrier Brevet dwelt at a tuft of grass, quivered with excitement, and then jumped at it. Out pounced a great black rabbit, and with a chorus of yap-yapping from the two terriers away they raced. Bang went Billy's gun with fatal aim, and over rolled the rabbit.

'Oh dear, oh dear!' screamed his reverence in great consternation, 'you've shot my old black doe that I had given me three years ago by the Marquis of Carribas; what a pity to be sure; she is pretty certain to be heavy in young, and most likely suckling a litter as well.'

'Oh, I am so sorry,' said poor Billy, who had hoped to receive praise for his masterly performance. 'I didn't know she was to be saved. I thought she was to take her chance with the rest.'

'But didn't you see her? or did your gun go off before you intended?' went on the reverend wrathfully, knowing full well that his young friend in his eagerness would have shot at the rabbit if it had been blue or green even. 'Eugh,' he grunted, rescuing the black rabbit's remains from the worrying terriers, 'I would have as soon you had shot me almost. Pretty day's business, indeed, shooting a black rabbit.'

'But is not a black rabbit the black sheep of the warren?' queried Billy, who hoped to clear himself, if possible.

'Bother your muttons!' snorted the old gentleman angrily.

'Don't you know that a black rabbit is the parson of the warren?'

Poor Billy's desire to shoot any more that day was damped, and packing up his traps he was soon starting homewards. But his reverence moderated before he left, and made Billy promise that he would keep his engagement to come to lunch next day; he had not finished roasting him yet.

'Here, cookie,' said his reverence, taking the rabbit into the kitchen, and interviewing his plump housekeeper, 'I've brought you material for a tart; it will just about fit my young friend's appetite at lunch to-morrow, and take the steam out of him for the venison.'

'Lor, sir; it will take a deal of stewing,' said the plump matron, looking askance at the black rabbit.

'And, cookie,' persisted the old gentleman, 'I want you to stick two black pads in the centre of the crust, as you would pie-johns' feet.'

'Lor, sir; it will look so funny like, and I should not like for the gentlemen to go and think as how I didn't know how to serve up a rabbit-pie.'

His reverence got his way of course, and when the invited came to lunch next day, poor Billy was placed opposite that pie. How he did get chaffed to be sure about shooting the parson; he looked thoroughly uncomfortable in the presence of that pie, with the black pads peeping out, and quite lost his appetite for the venison. It taught him a lesson, however, and quite cured him of asking for invitations to shoot.

As time went on, however, Billy got abundance of invitations, and, much to his credit, shot very fairly when he gave himself time to see what he really was shooting at. But perhaps the great day of all, the red letter day in his shooting career, came (thanks to the Rev. Samuel Blowhard, who had helped him on in many ways), when he was lucky enough to get an invitation to help shoot some fawn for forthcoming festivities in a neighbouring park.

It was one misty January morning, the ground was white with frost, but the sun forcing its way through gave every sign of melting the morning rime, and made everything sparkle and glisten with dew. Billy, attired in his nicely weather-stained shooting garments, joined the party assembled in the courtyard of the Hall about eight o'clock one morning. The head-keeper, Mr. Waddy, was in charge, and there were two other keepers and a boy—in all, three guns.

The grooms from the stable exercising the hunters and polo ponies joined the party; they were to gallop round the deer and drive them up to the guns, which job just suited them, for it meant putting two days' exercise into one.

After a walk across the park, the herd of deer were espied through the grey morning mist, in one compact body near a large patch of bracken fern. The guns quickly made their way to the oak avenue, and waited in ambush behind the trunks of the trees. The grooms then cantered up to the herd, which was soon on the move, and started off at a trot in one long column, with an old hind leading. The leader of the herd, with her fawn and two young bucks, got past the horsemen, pointing away in a wrong direction for the guns to get a shot at them as they passed. In dashed an excited young groom on a pulling polo pony, yelling like a Red Indian, thinking thereby to stop the rush of the hundred and fifty or so deer coming on, and turn them back on to the guns. But this was of no avail; deer will follow a lead as persistently as sheep will, and two young bucks, coming straight at the pony, with one bound cleared him, and scared the would-be frightener out of his seven senses, and rendered the pony totally unfit ever to face deer again. The rest of the herd came on and cantered by, forming one long column.

The guns now had to move their position, and run across the park to a belt of trees about three-quarters of a mile distant, by which the deer were expected to pass. Billy soon began to blow like a grampus, hurrying over the rough grass and carrying his gun, and the two keepers, who seemed all wire and whipcord, left him in their wake, and getting up in time accounted for three fawn. Nothing daunted, though clean pumped out, Billy let drive at sixty yards as the last fawn raced by. The shot, as might be supposed, did not take effect, and the head-keeper counselled Billy to shoot steadier, and walk up to his deer, and pick them off as they came up to him, at a considerably shorter range.

A council of war now took place, and it was decided that the horsemen should ride the deer back up the beech avenue, the big tree trunks making admirable shelter for the guns. Billy was stationed at the first post, with instructions to shoot anything that came by, except an old buck. He had ample time to cool down and collect himself before the shouts of the grooms were heard, and the belling and the grunting of the deer, as

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with a rushing noise they came on, rustling through the dead leaves under the beech-trees. Our hero's heart beat nineteen to the dozen, and his waistcoat felt hardly capable of containing it. He let the leaders of the herd pass by, before he realised that he must shoot.

With nerves braced up for the supreme effort, Billy stepped from behind his shelter, fully prepared to pick out his fawn, and drop him with a well-directed shot in the head. Did his sight deceive him at the critical moment, or did he see visions like those consequent upon a disordered liver, as the forms of two donkeys with clanking chains attached, and two rough ponies, passed betwixt Billy and the deer. The gun went off; our hero never quite knew how, for the whole avenue seemed to be a whirl of heels and heads. In a few seconds the herd had passed by at increased speed, leaving two fawns behind to the keepers' guns.

'I am afraid that the washerwoman's donkeys spoilt your shot, sir,' said the head-keeper, coming up to Billy, who stood breathless with excitement. 'Which fawn did you shoot at, sir?'

But before Billy had time to answer, a fine old antlered buck was seen to lag behind the steaming herd, for the galloping about had told on them, and made them hang their tongues out and blow. Moving with uncertain gait for a few yards, the stag rolled over on the green sward.

'Pity to have picked him out, sir,' said the keeper.

But Billy heard him not; a feeling of triumph stole over him as he strode up to the prostrate form of the stag, and the keeper proceeded to perform the *coup de grace*, and let the vermillion life-stream flow away on to the dried bracken fern.

The grooms on their well-exercised nags rode up, and formed an admiring group round the deer, as Billy stood proudly by and guessed at the weight and age of his victim.

Waddy, the keeper, wisely pocketed his vexation, and made the best of a bad job, and Billy, coming down handsomely, was promised the head, which he afterwards had stuffed and mounted, an object to point to for the rest of his life, as the grand trophy of his first deer drive.

In the next drive, to kill off the required number of fawn, the keeper took care to put Billy in a safe place, so that he did not get another shot that day, or make another palpable hit.

THE BADGER BELEAGUERED.

By 'CORDLEY.'

IN its answers to correspondents, a certain great and infallible sporting paper once stated that the following would be found to be a complete list of animals that have been hunted in this country :—'Red and fallow deer, roe-buck, fox, otter, hare, badger, martin, pole-cat, wild cat, wild boar, and wolf.' And, save that mart*in* should be mart*en*, the great sporting paper is fairly correct. In the present paper it is intended to deal with the badger only.

Now, the badger is expected to make himself sportingly useful in three ways. The three kinds of 'badgering' are—drawing the badger, hunting the badger, and digging the badger. The first of these consists in worrying a semi-tame badger (kept for the purpose in a barrel, whence his foe essays to draw him) with dogs—the nominal object being to test the gameness of the dog ; the real one, frequently, an excuse for wagering. This is a cruel, barbarous, unsportsmanlike, and withal, illegal practice. The two last, if properly and fairly carried out, may justly be termed 'sport,' and entail no more cruelty than does the noble and national sport of fox-hunting.

There are other varieties of 'badgering,' which, however, as they are not germane to the text, need not be described, but merely indicated. Such are, the treatment of the Chief Secretary for Ireland by certain hon. members in the House of Commons ; a form of cross-examination adopted in the courts of law by some barristers ; the conjugal conduct of certain husbands towards their wives, and alas! of certain wives towards their husbands ; and other forms which will suggest themselves to the ingenuous reader.

In hunting the badger a moonlight night is chosen : the earths are stopped after the game has vacated its fortress in quest of food ; the dogs (a scratch and most unlevel pack) are laid upon the trail or drag of the animal, hunting up to it in time ; then, running from scent to view, a cross-country chase sets in ; the badger makes for his earth, into the mouth of which, during his absence, has been inserted a sack ; he cannot get in, and so is *bagged* and taken alive.

Very peculiar are the habits of the badger, or brock, as the

Saxon ancestors of those who are not pure Celts called the animal; the Welsh call it 'daear fochyn,' earth pig, or 'mochyn bychan,' little pig. So retiring and nocturnal a beast is it, that he is but little known in England at the present day; that such was also pretty much the case so far back as the time of Queen Elizabeth we may fairly assume from the fact that Shakespeare —a very wide-awake person—only alludes to him once throughout the whole of his voluminous writings, fond as he is of reference to sports and animals, and that but indirectly. Thus, in 'Twelfth Night,' Sir Toby says to Malvolio, *sotto voce*, 'Marry, hang thee, Brock.' From this we further perceive that the Bard knew little of the animal, otherwise he would not have used the name of a creature so cleanly and harmless as a term of reproach. In Shakespeare we find no further reference to brock, broc, or badger.

But though badgers are comparatively rare, and to the generality of the inhabitants of these islands (especially the dwellers in towns) unknown, they are still fairly plentiful in certain parts of the country, particularly in the North and West of England, where their habits and *habitat* are known to gamekeepers, sportsmen, farm-labourers, naturalists, and all those whom pleasure or duty takes much into the woods and fields, and the rocky recesses of valleys and ravines. They are a source of comfort and of joy to the sportsman on 'off days,' when the more legitimate pleasures of the chase are unattainable; whilst to that combination of pluck, intelligence, eagerness, restlessness, faithfulness, and zeal, known as the terrier, they furnish endless delight. Quiet and inoffensive in its habits, the badger is at the same time bold and resolute, and defends itself with great resolution; it bites keenly, and maintains its gripe with marvellous tenacity. Those who have seen a bull-terrier after an encounter with a too staunch badger, will not need to be told how terrible is the bite of the animal.

As regards the food of the badger, much difference of opinion prevails. It has been said that he will attack the nests of wild bees (after the manner of his congener the bear), plundering the store of honey and devouring the larvæ without dread of the stings of the enraged insects, which cannot, indeed, penetrate its thick, rough hide. Gamekeepers—a disinterested, large-minded, highly intellectual class of men—assert that the harmless brock is greatly addicted to the consumption not only of eggs, but also of product of the egg. We know that its aliment is in a great measure vegetable; we think that it eats insects, and reptiles, and quadrupeds; we fear that it is not averse to eggs and birds; but the good the creature does far outweighs the evil.

Besides being a most inoffensive creature, the badger is singularly clean. It never obeys the calls of nature in its burrow. It is said that our beloved and crafty friend the fox takes advantage of this niceness, and uses an obvious method to make the badger's home unpleasant, of which he by this means possesses himself. This may be so, yet badgers and foxes are found in the same earth.

It is owing to the badger's peculiar conformation that he is so terrible an enemy. For though nature has furnished him with formidable weapons of offence, and has, besides, endued him with strength and courage to use them with great effect—though he is very harmless and inoffensive if unattacked, employing his arms and vigour solely for support—yet, few creatures defend themselves better, or bite with greater keenness than the badger, its defence being characterised by marvellous agility. Its motions are so quick that a dog is often desperately wounded in the moment of assault. The thickness of the badger's hide, and the length and coarseness of its hair, are an excellent defence against the bites of dogs; its skin is so loose as to resist the impression of their teeth, and gives the animal an opportunity of turning itself about, and inflicting upon its adversaries the most terrible wounds in the tenderest parts.

Having thus philosophised over our quarry quite enough, let us in fancy join ourselves to a badger digging-party down in the roughest part of the wild and picturesque west country.

Jan Zummerzett—one of those lowly yet inspired high priests of sport that are to be found in every county in these sporting islands; Jan Zummerzett, farmer, farrier, ferret-dealer, rat-catcher, want- (*i.e.*, mole) catcher, ex-whipper-in, horse-clipper, fly-tyer, purveyor of dogs to all the country-side—Jan Zummerzett reports badgers in a steep and lofty and thick covert, yclept the Rookery. A party is hastily arranged, consisting of the Squire (whom we jocularly dub M.B.H.), a few neighbouring sportsmen, the sporting doctor (a product of all truly rural regions), Jan Zummerzett, of course, acting as huntsman and second-in-command, the writer and the reader, and half a dozen rustic sappers and navvies seduced from the village and their legitimate calling by two right potent talismans, sport and beer. The badger's subterranean castle is fortified with cunningly constructed platforms, parapets, casemates, ramparts, escarps, counterscarps, and all kinds of intricate earthworks calculated to baffle his opponents and defend and glorify himself, behind which, when assaulted, he entrenches himself, ever throwing up in his rear, as he retreats, fresh barriers of earth.

Coming to the badger-earths in the Rookery, we find that Jan is right; they are inhabited. Fresh soil has recently been hurled forth from the mouth or main entrance of the citadel: there are other marks that are read like a book by one so skilled in all that pertains to woodcraft and venerie as Jan Zummerzett, as footprints, ordure, and the like. Out of a dozen yelling, quivering, eager canine volunteers, two are selected to commence the fray—Zeb and Dizzy. Zebedee is an old and wary warrior, Disraeli, young, enthusiastic, full of valour, though somewhat lacking in discretion. Once uncoupled, the pair dart into the yawning orifice with Curtius-like *abandon*, and quickly disappear into the bowels of the earth. The short yap-yapping grows fainter and fainter, sounds from depths deeper and deeper still, until it is only by laying an ear to the ground that one can hear a faint rumbling, barking, and a sound, as it were, of scratching.

Quoth Jan, in the seventh heaven of delight, 'They terrifying of 'un.' Terrifying the dauntless soul of the badger, using the verb 'to terrify' in its normal sense, truly they were not. He meant that the dogs were occupying the attention and time of the creature, were keeping him busily engaged in watching and warding their carefully balanced onslaughts, were preventing his digging onwards and downwards concurrently with the mining of the engineers as they strove to approach the keep of his castle.

Guided by the subterranean noises, indistinct though they be, which tell the direction in which the 'terrifying' process is being prosecuted, the main gallery is quickly opened by the diggers, side passages are stopped and cut off. The badger is indeed beleaguered; the stronghold of *Meles vulgaris* is closely invested.

Becoming faint and weary with their exertions, vocal and physical, and with lack of air, Lord Beaconsfield and Zebedee are coaxed to the surface, where they are allowed to lap water freely from a bucket (thoughtfully provided) before they are coupled up and sent to the rear. Neither has received serious injury from the powerful and terrible jaws of the badger. The one from experience and training, the other from instinct and example, and because the veteran most chiefly engaged the attention of the badger, has behaved after the most approved method of badgering warfare. They have sufficiently 'terrified' the foe to stay his digging, and they have thrown their tongues freely enough to give due information to their human allies on the surface, avoiding alike the bull-dog system of closing with and silently collaring the enemy in a relentless grip, and the faint-hearted, cur-like style of utterly declining to stand to him. Meanwhile, the quarry, relieved from the pressing attentions of Zebedee and Dizzy, retreats from the *cul de sac* (or 'pudding-bag,' as the forcible, homely Saxon tongue hath it; Welsh, 'cwd poten') in which he recently was beleaguered, and swiftly threading a side-aisle or gallery, seeks a distant bastion.

Then the want-terrier—Aspasia by name—is inserted and sent to ground (the special and fitting vocation of such an animal, as its name, *terrier*, showeth). It is some time before the terrifying process is resumed, for the dog has to seek the badger through countless and endless labyrinthine passages. But at last 'Spashy,' as she is colloquially called, gets to business, and the band plays, though faintly as it sounds to attentive ears on the surface. After a prolonged skirmish Aspasia is with difficulty persuaded to retire. That abandoned female abandons the combat, and comes into the air in a state of asphyxia, and two young dogs are 'entered;' in a dual sense entered are they. Both acquit themselves gamely and well, behaving in a manner alike creditable to their ancestry, and pleasing to their owners. Scamp goes to the badger in a raffish, vagabond, blackguard manner consonant with his name and pedigree (of Parson Jack's strain is he) being with difficulty retrieved, though suffering from abrasions, cuts, wounds, and a hole in his head. As for Nell, the sporting doctor's beautiful bitch pup, no sooner is she well underground than a round of alarums and excursions is heard. She essays the 'terrifying' process, but refuses to come out until the fortress is taken, the garrison defeated, the chieftain made captive, and the assault accomplished.

But before these things, devoutly to be wished, come to pass, there are breaches, ambuscades, sallies, and various passages incident to grim-visaged, mortal, staring war. The beleaguered one resolves upon a sally. He digs away from little Nell during a period of temporary incapacitation, as regards that gasping creature, and, quickly interposing a wall of earth between himself and her, slopes into a corridor that leads to a side entrance (or sally-port) some distance from the main one, which the besiegers are investing, and exit.

One of the party has a huge brindled bull-dog, of which he is vastly fond, but which does not commend itself to either master or huntsman. Like all true bull-dogs, Pluto is a gentle, affectionate, well-conducted creature—in time of peace; but when the din of war rings in his ears, strife and strugglings take place before his eyes, he becomes temporarily a fiend incarnate, prone to collar anything, man, dog, badger, or any other thing that draws breath. And when Pluto catches hold he is prepared to hang on like grim death, 'for everlasting.'

So, at the commencement of the siege, Pluto (in leash) and his owner were stationed in a thicket some hundred yards to the rear of head-quarters, and close to the sally-port of the badger—but this they knew not.

After a time, weary of inaction, Pluto's master chained that Hadean hero to a distant tree, and presently one of the party strolled down to the spot recently occupied by the truant and his dog. This was a few moments before the badger elected to issue forth. When, therefore, the foe was seen, a wondrous cacophony arose. 'Tally-ho!' 'Let go that great ugly bull-dog!' 'Loose all the dogs!' 'Too-loo-loo!' 'Yoo-ie, dogs!' &c.

As the badger bolted there commenced a scurry truly ecstatic (alas! that human joys should be so brief and fleeting). Down through the steep and brambly coverts rushed dogs and men, pellmell, barking, shrieking, yelling, curs——, well, objurgating with rage and excitement. Following a well-known beaten track, a kind of tunnel beneath a network of tangled undergrowth, the badger travels rapidly. Not so his human foes. As for the dogs, the cheering and the mad excitement prove too much for them. Utterly demoralised, they run wildly hither and thither, all except Pluto. Pluto grasps the situation in a glance. He tears along the track of the brock, more by faith and sight than scent, of which, however, there is plenty. 'Zent or stink' Jan Zummerzett calls it. The dog nearly catches the rough, uncouth-looking creature, which just manages to pop down a large rabbit hole, into the depths of which (that is, so far as the pair may win their way) Pluto promptly follows. Then there is a sound as of terrific combat. The men with spades quickly expose to view the pair locked in a mortal embrace. Pluto is at last choked off by his master, covered with blood and dreadful gashes, which he licks with a self-satisfied air. Jan adroitly performs the difficult and dangerous operation of 'tailing' the badger, and dropping him into a bag warily held in readiness, little the worse for his several encounters, and from the boscage of the beauteous Exe valley upon the evening air ascends to the lofty moors above a triumphant, awe-inspiring shriek,—'Whoo-whoop!'

MELTONIANA.

By TOM MARKLAND.

CHARLEY Downs is rough-rider to Mr. Behrens, and, as the hunting-stud at Newport Lodge numbers some forty, his is no sinecure. All have to be taught their business if possible, though there are importations to the Nottingham End stables which prove beyond even Charley's capabilities. They will never learn to take 'timber slow,' and some will never take water at all, perhaps from a desire to imitate some of their lords and masters. At every meet, whoever else may be absent, there is quiet, unassuming Charley, well mounted one day on an advanced pupil requiring a breather, again bestriding something on which he is likely to see very little of the fun, for the horse may refuse at the first fence, in which case no amount of pains will be spared to impress upon him the idea that 'the final cause' of a fence is (not to keep cattle from straying, but as in the case of a fortress) 'to be taken.'

When the mount is of the other kind there is generally some fair lady to be obliged with the accommodation of a 'lead,' which Charley is always ready to give when he knows he can do it properly.

From the nature of his calling it follows that his premium to the Accident Insurance Society is exceedingly heavy; but, thanks to his surpassing skill in horsemanship, which the societies don't make any allowance for, he had never cost them a cent till the season 1884–1885, and that came about in a most unexpected manner. We were standing at the main entrance to the new Great Northern Station—Charley, Mr. Mason, the district superintendent of the line, and myself—and, as Mr. Mason's tricycle was standing near, Charley said, 'May I ride your horse?' 'Certainly,' was the reply. So up goes Charley, and puts on the speed with a vengeance. The carriage drive being a very steep incline, and sweeping round with a pretty sharp curve before it reaches the Scalford road, our rider soon found he had done too much at it, and strove hard to put on the brake as he neared the above-mentioned turn, but either he couldn't work it properly, or the acquired velocity was too great—anyway, he had to throw himself off to avoid having his neck broken by being pitched over into the hollow below. He was fearfully cut about, and lost a lot of blood, but fortunately escaped without permanent injury. He, however, could not turn up at covert side for some time, and I noticed that during his absence the reports of the runs in the local papers showed a great increase of padding, and a woeful lack of interesting detail. In one case there was rather too much detail, as the innocent correspondent had been seeking for information from a well-known groom rejoicing in the *sobriquet* of Lord ——. The Cottesmore had been at the Gravel-Hole Spinney, and Lord —— gravely informed the scribe that they were always sure of a fox there, because there was one at the top of a low hollow trunk of a tree, and that Neal had nothing to do but send a whip to drive him out, and 'there you were, don't you know.' This duly appeared in print, and they say the chronicler thereof has been more careful about making promiscuous inquiries since.

I might fill this article about Downs, but I must bid him adieu, and good luck to him, for he is a general favourite. Far distant be the day when this 'king of the riders' shall hear his last whoo-whoop! with Belvoir, Cottesmore, or Quorn.

If the above named be king of the riders, the other Charley may fairly claim the title of father of the stud-grooms. What a storehouse is that brain of old Charley Wells! It is fraught with many a recollection of the 'wild old days of Waterford and his convivial crowd,' which the old man will relate with great relish; but generally winds up with a hint that 'it was all very fine, but it spoiled Melton for the time.' Doubtless it did, and the feeble imitation of the Marquis, indulged in a few years ago, met with no approval, even the press deeming it best to let it die a natural death. I allude to the elegant feed and subsequent free fight, with the joints or their remains for weapons, which was engaged in by a few choice spirits, who afterwards, I believe, turned their attention to the North Pole: a very good thing too.

Then the accuracy with which Charlie can describe all the 'good things' of the past is wonderful. He is no mere *laudator temporis acti*, for though he recounts the old runs with an air of loving remembrance, he acknowledges that the pace is greater on the average now, and the riders quite equal to the men of the 'squire's' time. Yet he misses a 'something,' and it is easy to gather from stray remarks what that 'something' is. I think I hear a reader say, 'Of course, the man himself sees things differently now he is old;' but that is not all. He grew up and reached his prime at a time when masters did not look on servants as mere machines, nor think it necessary to throw such a veil of conventionality over their intercourse with them.

'What do you think of Lord ——?' says somebody to Charley.

'Oh, I don't know,' was his reply, 'they all seem so much alike now; you used to get to know how to humour them and how to make them swear; but, bless you, they don't swear above once a-fortnight now, and that leaves you wonderfully in the dark as far as reckoning a gentleman up goes.'

This is true, though, of course, poor 'Chicken' and one or two others certainly did even latterly give their men ample opportunities of studying their characters. Speaking of 'the Chicken' brings old Large, the head-keeper at Dalby, to mind. Large was about the only man who cared to try to control him and his friends. I remember once they wanted to shoot some of the home coverts which the squire wanted kept quiet, and when Large told them they couldn't go into them that day, 'You be ——,' says 'Chicken.'

'Never mind,' replies old John; 'you won't shoot those coverts to-day;' and they didn't.

I know this to be true, though I am aware of the enormous amount of salt generally required for consumption with John's little anecdotes. I have his portrait before me as I write, the one where he stands with one foot on a stile, and has the famous old double-barrel under his arm. I don't know who was the prime mover in the mischief, but I can say that John Large no more deserved the persecution he endured at the hands of the Cottesmore Hunt, and which ended in his dismissal from his post, than I did. If Andrew Hazeldine, 'Old Hospitality' as we called him, be alive, he will bear me out in saying that Large was a fox-preserving gamekeeper if ever there was one; and the hunt records show that Gartree was more than once 'premier covert' during Large's *régime*, and he received the prizes for it. It may be interesting to know that he was installed by Mr. Hartopp in a flourishing public, the 'Black's Head,' at Melton, and played 'mine host' to the satisfaction of his customers till he died from apoplexy a few years ago. He was a good keeper and a 'jolly good fellow,' and the esteem in which he was held was evidenced by the way the Burton and Dalby farmers flocked to his hostelry on market days. I will just mention one other episode in his career before leaving him.

Between thirty and forty poachers came over one evening from Leicester, and, driving their wagonettes up the lane leading from Burton to Stapleford, coolly proceeded to work. Untackling the horses, and leaving one or two caretakers, they commenced netting, making no effort at concealment. Large was soon on the scene with what help he could muster, but the poachers didn't stop, as they were four to one. No, they told him to 'mind his own business.' 'All right,' replied he, and, turning the old white pony's head towards Melton, bade them good-night, and trotted away. Arrived at Melton he wired to Leicester, Nottingham, Loughborough, Grantham, and Oakham, with the result that when the depredators were driving through Belgrave in the small hours three-fourths of them were netted by the police, who had come out that far from Leicester to welcome them.

'That's how I "minded my own business,"' the old man would say with a chuckle when he had told the tale.

Although, as I have hinted above, John was no unworthy disciple of Munchausen, his boasts about the 'double barrel' and his turf memory were by no means overdrawn—ill-natured people say because he couldn't overdraw them. Certain it is that the gun in question did not require the attention in the way of cleaning that ordinary guns demand. I have used it myself for a fortnight at a stretch without soiling tow, and as all the muzzle-loading guns I had carried required daily attention to make them 'shoot' well, this goes a long way to establish the truth of Large's assertion, 'Turn her up after each shot, and pat the butt with your hand, and you'll want no washing.' He boasted that the gun had been washed after three years' use, and then scarcely soiled the water. As regards his mental tenacity in racing matters, plenty of Meltonians will bear me out in stating that John could name the winner for any given year, and generally place the next two, in every one of the classical races for the last half century—of course, I mean after the events. All who throng annually to Gartree will miss his burly form at the quiet corner, waiting for a chance woodcock, and seeing that his men kept the foot folks back till Charley had fairly broken on one of the two right sides.

Breaking on the right side at Gartree! What a volume of meaning lies in the phrase to those who know! Barring an 'accident' at the Punchbowl, it means in all probability a run such as Lennox would have loved to follow, and the author of the *Cream of Leicestershire* delight to describe. The Punchbowl, a snug little gorse at the foot of one of the Dalby Hills, has unfortunately played the part of the Colosseum, in which many a gallant fox has been 'chopped' to make a foot hunter's holiday. Three miles from the town, it is always favoured by a numerous coterie of irregular infantry, who line the overhanging hill, whence they can see every rabbit that stirs, while the gorse is alive with the 'waving sterns,' and poor Reynard seeks in vain for egress, till at last, with a reproachful gaze at the spoil-sport throng, he meets the fate of those who in old time cried *morituri te salutant.*

To avoid these butcheries the Quorn tried the expedient of only announcing their meets to the subscribers of their hunt; but when a man returning late from his club succeeds in deceiving the partner of his joys by solemnly informing her that he has been detained 'atnimportant shintific meeting,' when Johnny Micawber pays me the fiver he borrowed last year 'just for a day or two,' when Hercules has quieted the nocturnal music on the tiles, then, and then only, will you keep dark the rendezvous of the 'scarlet throng.' Every shopboy in Melton is a reliable authority on the point, and unless the master trot to the meet with 'sealed orders,' that is almost without knowing himself where the first 'draw' is to take place, they will know that too. There are men among this foot contingent who follow the season through, and regard the close as mournfully as the well-known lady who shed tears as she rode over the Burton End bridge because 'there would be no more hunting till Kirby Gate.' What an addition to the field would these have been under other circumstances if the gods had been more propitious, and they had not been doomed to 'waste their fragrance on the desert air.' We have, after all, plenty of fur as a rule in these parts, and you haven't extinguished the hunting spirit in a Leicestershire man when you have dismounted him, so the best thing to do is to be as economical of your Saxon as it lies in human nature to be, and trot off smartly to the next stronghold, where you are pretty certain to find a customer at home, for the

A Croxton Park Wednesday

see page 213.

Widmerpool country, which is the only one where there is much likelihood of repeated blanks, lies too wide for this unwelcome contingent to follow. As regards the Punchbowl, the foot folks generally relieved us of their presence by running to ground at Dalby Hall, where open house was kept on such occasions in the Squire's time. Yes,—

> 'We know how brown October flowed whene'er the hunt swept by,
> The buttery hatch was worn as that in old-time minstrelsy.'

But the squire he is dust, and his spurs are rust, and we must 'hark forrard' to the 'beautiful Belvoir,' whose nearest fixture is Thorpe Arnold, a mile or so away, but their most interesting meets are Croxton Park and Hose Grange. The famous park is three miles from the castle, and at the spot where we muster are the ruins of what was once a noble mansion, and a dark-looking row of stables whence in Lord Forester's day old Thurlby horsed the hunt in a manner that compelled the admiration of those who knew what inadequate means he had at his command. He was truly a Caleb Balderstone in resources, and always used to make a point of keeping his stables as dark as possible during the night, which he said went a long way to account for the liveliness of certain celebrated screws when they turned out in the morning. The park itself is full of scenes of diversified loveliness; there are hollow oaks beneath whose boughs De Montfort's warriors rode, and that were saplings when Robert de Todenei made good his title to the fair demesne. He received as his guerdon from the Conqueror glades, and groves, and herds of lordly deer. But Frank Gillard and his surroundings claim our attention. If you want to know Frank I'll tell you a better way than reading anything I can pen. Visit the kennels on a non-hunting day, and Frank will make time 'gallop' with you. He will not only receive you with the most genial hospitality, but show you the king of packs in their home, a sight once seen never to be forgotten—*verbum sap.*, take a little whip with you, and *respice finem*, which Jorrocks would call Latin for *mind your latter end*, when you get into the part where the bitches are occupied with their maternal cares.

To-day he is surrounded not only by the 'bright Belvoir tan,' but by a gathering that can scarcely be equalled elsewhere for quality and numbers. Besides the full Melton contingent many a good rider, and not a few fair ladies, hie to Croxton from Grantham, and the ancestral homes that surround the ancient town on every side.

Lawn Hollow has been the first draw from a Croxton meet time out of mind, and when Gillard has 'thrown in' we spend the time till the overture in praying earnestly that the particular fox destined for our quarry may not have formed any demoralising connexions with the ringing denizens of the woods round the castle. If these prayers be answered, there is no telling how good a thing is in store for us.

Hose Grange is a fine old stone farmhouse of quadrangular shape, and has always been the favourite fixture of the Vale. Loud and bitter was the outcry when this holy land was invaded by the iron horse, its pastures cut up by navvies, and bound down by nineteenth century rail, but I am glad to say the gloomy forebodings have not been fulfilled to anything like the extent anticipated. The railway runs along the foot of the Belvoir hills, leaving the vale clear, so it is seldom a run is spoiled by it, as a fox that made his line that way would nine times out of ten give us the slip in the vast range of timber stretching from Stathern to Belvoir. From Clawson Thorns, Harby Hills, and Sherbrook's Gorse, I have known many a fox take it out of three-fourths of the field, for the going is very heavy in parts, and the fences not built of match-boxes. The pace, too, of these hounds is probably slightly faster than that of any pack in the world.

The Belvoir country is of such immense extent that you cannot hunt it on the Ropsley, or north-eastern side from Melton, so two such fixtures as I have here described are all you can get per week with the 'Duke's.' 'And enough too,' I think I hear some poor sub say, 'unless you can get some good-natured old boy to mount you.'

The two remaining days are devoted to the Cottesmore, where Neal, a canny north-countryman, wields the horn, and I have very pleasant remembrances of a day spent in the inspection of the kennels and stables of Barleythorpe, the account of which appeared in the columns of *Land and Water* early in 1885. Many interesting relics of this hunt, perhaps the oldest in England, are to be seen at Barleythorpe, and amongst them a parchment defining the boundaries of the country when it passed again into the hands of the Lonsdale family about half a century ago.

Woodwell Head is the stronghold of which Cottesmore is most proud, and with reason good, for it is said that Woodwell *has never been drawn blank.* From the Head the Buckminster line furnishes a run that leaves nothing to be desired if the right fun be in front, and the burst over Lord Dysart's park is a *bonne bouche* for the hot blood of the younger members of the hunt which they can scarcely find paralleled elsewhere.

PHEASANTS AND FAIR PLAY.

By 'SIRIUS.'

IN times of youth and ignorance of most things, especially of those pertaining to sport, it used to be a continual matter of astonishment to me how it happened that, as pheasant-shooting commenced on the first of October, Leadenhall Market could annually supply almost any quantity of those highly-esteemed birds at break of day, if necessary, on that particular date. Wending my way to our shooting rendezvous on a certain first of October my wonder in a great measure ceased to exist; for meeting one of the keeper's boys with two large covered baskets on his arms, trudging lustily and hastily towards the nearest market town of the district, I engaged him for a few minutes in apparently innocent conversation, and while doing so suddenly lifted the cover of one of the baskets, and was horrified at discovering underneath a number of plump pheasants of both sexes. I testified no surprise whatever, and the boy, exhibiting no confusion of face at all, nor the smallest symptom of conscious guilt, observed in the coolest manner possible that he knew nothing whatever about the sender of the birds, his business being only to deliver them to an address at W——— as coming from the Earl of M———. It was a well-known fact that his lordship was in the habit of selling game to the dealers; but I questioned if he did it in this huckstering and retail fashion. However, it was clearly no concern of mine, and I have had reason since to suspect that his lordship had no hand at all in this particular transaction, but that the keepers were entirely responsible for the premature slaughter, and that they were systematically robbing his lordship in all directions. *Quousque tandem?* The iniquity of the keepers was further demonstrated by my shortly afterwards finding a fine pheasant in a trap in a small coppice on our beat.

The noble Earl above mentioned had a magnificent seat and preserves pretty nearly surrounding our happy shooting grounds; and on the further side of a little rivulet, which meandered through the territory, another county magnate of somewhat lesser magnitude had also some extensive pheasant preserves and woods. This gentlemen, like the Earl, was a ferocious preserver of game, and to this end kept any number of guardians of feather and flick, but scarcely of the peace, for they were continually running amuck with the sporting farmers and other restless young blades of the neighbourhood. As to ever inquiring into the characters and eccentricities of their keepers, that was a thing that never once entered their minds. They were, therefore, always right and everybody else of necessity wrong. After all, the question *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* was purely a matter for their own consideration, and if they tamely submitted to be plundered it was no concern of ours. So long as these trusty keepers did not interfere with us we were well satisfied, and so long as they badgered and bullied the peasantry, and showed no very serious diminution of game, the grandees made no complaint, and were contented to live on in blissful ignorance of what was going on around them.

Our manor—we always insisted upon this designation of our somewhat circumscribed sporting arena not only as having an aristocratic flavour in the estimation of friends at a distance, but also as a convenient and gratifying means of showing that to his lordship and the squireen that we considered ourselves at least of some importance in the county—was in the very centre of the two greater shooting quarters, and in the particular matter of the pheasant it possessed peculiar advantages. It was in reality nothing of greater account than a large estate or barton, which was excellently farmed by one of the best and jolliest fellows in all the country side by the name of Vosper. It was the practice of this gentleman—for he was a gentleman although only a tenant farmer—to cultivate the growth of buckwheat on rather a more extended scale than is customary among the agriculturists of his district. The reason of this, however, in the neighbourhood of surrounding pheasant preserves, would be sufficiently obvious to the sportsman, and was eminently well calculated to vex the unrighteous souls of the magnates' game-preserving myrmidons. Of course they never failed to put down to poor Vosper's account every complaint of pheasant failure in their own plantations, and the barton formed a remarkably available safety valve of escape from many a glaring deficiency and awkward dilemma after a poaching raid. I am not at all sure that Vosper would have cared so much about buckwheat and pheasants if his more wealthy and aristocratic neighbours had been less haughty and overbearing. As it was, and as he had nothing to gain or to lose by the friendship or malevolence of his neighbours, he availed himself to the utmost of all the advantages at his command, and the result was very much to the benefit of those of his companions who evinced a sporting tendency, some capital pheasant shooting being not the least of the many good things he had to offer them. Buckwheat, as sportsmen are aware, is the most seductive of baits to induce the pheasant to take up his quarters in any given locality, provided those quarters can be made comfortable. The great recommendation of this kind of farming was that it obviated all anxiety about breeding and rearing, and insured a constant supply of pheasants at a most trifling expense, and afforded a mild exemplification of the proverb 'When rogues fall out honest men come by their own,' or, to put it in less objectionable form, the disagreement of the farmer of Pyeworthy Barton and the county magnates was the means of our coming by some very enviable shooting.

Needless now to say how fine was the weather and promising the prospects that inaugurated this year's pheasant shooting. Of much more consequence is it to tell how excellent was Vosper's reception of our party of four guns, and how inspiriting was the matutinal 'nip' of famous cherry bounce. Unlike our friends 'over the border' we stood in no need of keepers, for our game were purely of the natural and wild sort, and were not to be found in such quantities as to require this adventitious assistance in order to compass their destruction. But we were very nearly meeting with a sad mishap at the commencement of affairs, an incident which might have involved no less a catastrophe than the death of the parson. The worthy divine—being of that esteemed class of clergyman known as 'high church,' hove in sight on the other side of the hedge which was that of the parish road, and right in the line of fire—was proceeding to his usual morning service just as Coleby, one of our party (a rash man, and always ready to pull the trigger) was levelling at a stray partridge. Horror of horrors! the shot had sped, but fortunately something white, probably the parson's neckcloth, attracting Coleby's sight, he suddenly jerked his gun upwards just in time, and the calamity was averted. No harm having been done it was considered useless 'making a song about the matter,' and it is my belief that the parson to this hour is happily ignorant of the terrible peril in which he stood on that eventful morning of the first of October. It may be imagined that the spirits and nerves of the shooters were by no means improved by this unfortunate occurrence, and that some very erratic shooting was the consequence immediately afterwards.

Our canine contingent consisted merely of two famous Sussex spaniels well under command, but perhaps too fleet of foot for a fastidious taste, though for our rather peculiar kind of work this was more a recommendation of, than a drawback from, their qualifications: also of a nondescript article of the genus spaniel known among the *cognoscenti* as a salmon setter, the property of Vosper, and considered by him to be unparalleled among dogs used with the gun. He rejoiced in the name of 'Prin,' which it is reasonable to conjecture was a convenient abbreviation of 'Prince,' and being sadly out of training and condition caused terrible trouble during the day, and a fearful amount of objurgatory correction from his exasperated master. Our only beater was a fellow named Belben, half farmer and half gipsy, one of the greatest poachers in all the country, but also the cleverest breeder and rearer of pheasants, and the especial enemy of all game-keepers, as well as of those who hired and supported them. So vast was his reputation as a rearer of pheasants that the Earl had frequently made advantageous overtures to him with a view to his appointment as head-keeper. But Belben was inexorable, swore that he would be no keeper, and that he would have game whenever he liked in defiance of all the earls and squires in the kingdom. He held it no dishonesty to appropriate game at any time and place, and being a most powerful and determined man, and very popular among the country folks, the keepers thought it prudent to leave Mr. Belben pretty well to himself.

The principal shooting was over and through two large plantations, with a considerable amount of undergrowth, which were separated by a large field. Two of the guns and Belben entered the lower end with the dogs, while Vosper and myself awaited the game at the upper end and outside the fence, well knowing that the rocketers if escaping the fire in the enclosure would be sure to seek shelter in the further plantation. This plan of operations was attended with much success, and both parties were pleased with the results, notwithstanding some peppering about the legs from rioting among the rabbits. 'Thick as leaves in Vallombrosa' indeed might have been the description of the foliage in the coppice, and this rendered the shooting difficult for all but Vosper and myself, who enjoyed the lion's share of the sport. Still, the rest did not come badly off, and though the destruction was not upon such a scale as we are accustomed to read in high-flown newspaper paragraphs when birds are so plentiful and tame that the shooting of them is mere butchery, yet the enjoyment of such miscellaneous sport was ten times more satisfactory. Frequent and emphatic commands to 'Ware, hen!' were necessary enough, but in too many instances orders failed of their effect, the pardonable excuse being that it was often almost impossible to distinguish between the sexes. But our birds were stronger on the wing, and more advanced than most, and of old birds too we on the outside had a moderate share.

Like my Lord Bacon, Vosper had a prodigious idea of plantations, and now we had another to beat, in which most of the escaped had sought sanctuary. This one, however, was little more than a spinney in which were a number of tall firs, and through this we beat all together and indiscriminately. I do not know but suspect it was the noise of his lordship's *battue* hard by that made our party shoot so wildly and at random. Certain, however, it is that we did nothing like the execution expected of us, and that the quondam gipsy Belben was proportionately disgusted. The headstrong Prin drew down upon his devoted head the most fearful imprecations and the most terrible denunciations of his liver, though it appeared to me that it was his lungs that ought to have caused Mr. Belben's just maledictions. Anyhow, we not only missed outrageously but had some very narrow escapes of shooting one another. Hats were shot through, and this becoming too warm for pleasure, I was not sorry when the spinney was done with and we were driven to consult the hedgerows.

Miscellaneous again became our shooting, and although the staple commodity was pheasants, of which we had an abundant share, the vagaries of Prin provided us with plenty of stray shots at rabbits and partridges, so that we had a very excellent mixed bag before three o'clock in the afternoon. However, this was not to be compared with the van loads of slaughter that told the eloquent tale of the battue at his lordship's.

Our day ended unpleasantly, yet fitly enough when it is remembered upon what terms Vosper and his overbearing neighbours lived. The refractory Prin, in spite of all Belben's terrific threats and wheedlings, got away upon a hare which he ran clean into the angry Earl's possessions, and right under the muzzles of the head-keeper's gun. It was, perhaps, too great an insult to the dignity of such a functionary, and regardless of future consequences he deliberately shot that much offending and ill-broken salmon setter. Unfortunately for him and his present dignity, Belben heard the death-shriek of the poor dog, and was upon the keeper in the 'twinkling of a bedpost.' As the lamented Mr. Edmund Burke said, 'Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no ear had heard, and no imagination could adequately conceive,' for Belben there and then 'walked into' that dignified keeper, and paid off an old reckoning of long standing, which did the eyes of those who were 'up in time for the finish' good to see, and which saved both parties a deal of trouble and expense in invoking the aid of the lawyers or the kindly intercession of the R. S. P. C. A. It is possible, but I don't think it would be true, that we did not drink the gallant gipsy's health, and send him home glorious, and declaring he would never be a keeper after the supper we celebrated in honour of the first of October.

GUY LATHOM'S GOAL.

By 'A HALF-BACK.'

IN the Bolderby Club we'd as nice a fifteen—
Barring weight—as you need to turn out on the green:
We'd the pace and the practice—our full and half-backs
Many trophies had won on pedestrian tracks;
While our 'forwards' were wiry, their wind it was long,
And by dint of long drilling their 'passing' was strong.
But in spite of these merits, the truth to relate,
As I've hinted before, we were wanting in weight.
Many times when we'd worked down three-fourths of the ground,
From this weakness our goal-line in danger was found.
If they once got possession, of course at a push
Their advantage in weight took the ball with a rush,
Till some fortunate dodger that ball could obtain,
When their country had all to be conquered again.
So, dear reader, with ease the conclusion you'll draw
That the Bolderby prized the 'nine points of the law.'
Now we played ev'ry season a 'home and home' game
With one team called the Grampians, bulky in frame,
Mostly Scotsmen, broad-shouldered, and stalwart and tall,
Who 'lined up' with precision, and moved like a wall.
So with all our manœuvres we deemed it a feat
If we chanced now and then these Goliaths to beat.
Well, one season it chanced, when a week and a day
But remained ere the Grampians once more we must play,

We were told that no giant they'd shown us before
Was a patch on their new one, McCameron Mohr.
As the merchants of old with their marvellous tale
Of the Germans made Balbus and Caius turn pale,
So the news of the mighty McCameron fell
In the Bolderby camp like a Pallisser shell.
We were gravely assured that this wonderful Mac
Could still stagger along with five men on his back!
We grew funky, and looked on the struggle as lost,
And were most of us inwardly praying for frost,
When our captain, Guy Lathom, came into the room,
And looked round with a smile on the deepening gloom
That each visage displayed. 'What, boys! down on your luck?
Is lost, stolen, or strayed all the Bolderby pluck?
Have you heard the last news of this Scotsman so braw?
I'm informed that *he takes his rhinoceros raw!*'
When the roar had subsided, 'My hearties,' says Guy,
'If we can't beat the Scotsmen, at least we can try;
And the way to succeed is to wear a bold face,
I've no doubt in this wonder we'll find a weak place.'
Thus did Lathom, like Cæsar before him, contrive
The old fire in the breasts of our lads to revive,
Till the fifteen showed up on the ominous day
All determined brave parts in the struggle to play.

* * * * * * *

Now the leather's aloft from their end of the green,
And the rush from both sides for possession is keen;
Lathom gathers it neatly, goes off like a dart,
When the dodging won't serve him his passing is smart.
Tommy Turner's away! now he's past the full back,
And conclusions must try with the Grampian 'crack.'
Like a windmill he looms, his two arms like the sails,
And in spite of his twistings poor Tommy he nails,
Tears the ball from his grasp ere he's time for a 'pass,'
Or a chance to get down on the smooth-shaven grass.
Though we jumped on the Scotchman 'twas wond'rous to view
How he bore us, as erst our old friend in the Zoo
Bore the youth of Cockayne, to the 'quarter-way flag,'
When the limbs of the giant beginning to flag,
Guy jumped on to his head just to add the last straw,
'Twas as nice a 'spread-eagle' as ever you saw,
For the Grampian crack lost his grip in the fall,
And once more Tommy Turner got hold of the ball.
But the Grampians grabbed him, and 'down' was the cry,
When they bundled us backward, and landed a 'try.'

* * * * * * *

Neither one side nor t'other could make a point more,
So three points to our 'love' at 'half time' was the score.
Said old Guy, as he took up his stand for the kick,
'It's my private opinion these men we shall lick;
We've the wind in our favour, it's winning I feel,
I've a spoke, too, to put in McCameron's wheel.'
For the next thirty minutes the struggle grew hot,
They determined to keep the advantage they'd got,
We as keenly desirous of winning the game;
But do all that we could 'twas 'three—love' still the same.
Scarce ten minutes to time, when we passed it to Guy,
Now, thought we, with good luck there's a chance of a try.
Neither half-backs nor backs could stop Lathom's career,
They had played themselves out, and their bellows were queer,
While friend Jumbo had lately appeared somewhat slack,
And no wonder, three cargoes he'd had on his back.
They're but six yards apart! now can Lathom slip by?
No, a different 'spoke' was intended by Guy!
Through the whole country-side of high jumpers the best,
He came crash with his knees in McCameron's chest.
As before on his stomach, so now on his back,
He 'spread-eagled' once more the great Grampian crack,
Got a nice middle 'touch down,' and then from the try
Made the ball o'er the bar 'tween the goal posts to fly.
So we won; but the champion panted and swore
That Guy's style did not suit the McCameron Mohr.

BEATING OFF THE OPPOSITION COACH.

By 'A ROADSTER.'

YES, we had some toughish times of it in the old Highflyer, for we were rarely ever without opposition. I have heerd it said that opposition is the life o' trade. Well, I dare say, but it was the death of more than one good coachman and many a rattling good horse. And now you ax me if we ever tried to beat the record such as you have been a readin' about. Well, I can't say as ever we did. All a man was asked to do was to keep good time, and he got no thanks for being up a little early, for you were always supposed, in such cases, to have been taking it out of the hosses. But I recollects once beating off a' opposition coach that pushed us sorely, fairly bust it up and knocked it off its wheels; and if ye don't care, and beant in a hurry, I'll let ye hear how it came

"He came crash with his knees in McCameron's chest."

see page 222.

about. It's an old story, and I'm a pretty middling old man ye'll be gathering as I go along.'

I filled up the old veteran a rummer of cold brandy-and-water at the bar, also another for myself, and drew close in to the fire of the little bar-parlour at C——, in order that I might hear more accurately every word which fell from Jack Royston, the 'Last of the Old Guards,' as he was termed by the other frequenters of the hostelry.

'Ye must ha' heerd o' *our* Highflyer,' he said, by way of commencing; 'there were lots o' Highflyers, but ours was the highest and the flyest of 'em all, as Jem Robinson said, who drove her. Ye see Mr. Richard Tattersall, grandfather of him as you heer about now-a-days, he had a famous horse called Highflyer once. He named his house after it, he did; and when I was a boy the whole question was always, "Has he got any Highflyer blood in him?" for the old horse was a rare breeder. We had two hosses by one of his sons in the coach once, and a rare pair o' leaders they were, though they took a bit o' driving, or rather, holding back. Ye may rely on what I tell ye is right. I've a memory like an old way-bill for things that happened seventy years ago, but I could tell you nowt about yesterday afternoon for my life. I've filled up the boot long ago, and am not agoin' to take in any more o' the band-box yarns they tells you about over at the railway-station.

'We, that is me and Jem Robinson, worked the whole of the last stage from Carlisle up to Glasgow; and right proud we was about the job, too. The roads weren't maybe the best in the country, but our cattle couldn't well be beat. They were blood all over, and ye needn't tell me blood won't tell. What's the use o' the big Clevelands, rolling along and going as much sideways as frontways every step? No! if you goes coaching to-morrow you get something with blood, if hosses' hosses; and if you can't afford hosses, donkeys: but don't forget blood. We had the mails in charge, and big mails they were, too, always getting heavier, for Glasgow was growing bigger and bigger every day, and the rich merchants that were makin' their fortunes had a lot o' letters to come and go to their places and London. The getting o' the mails then, I needn't tell ye, was all a matter o' influence; which means sneaking and crawling, and singing psalms of a Sunday. At any rate it was so then, but don't you believe that there was any of that about Jem or me. No, no! Our Sundays was spent in the stables; mayhap we had a glass or two, and I'll not say we didn't have a hand at cards by times. "If I can't keep the road," Jem used to say, "without all that pulpit jumping, then I ain't fit to drive the Highflyer." However, folks can't get it all their own way in this world, and I don't believe they will in the next either, and, as sure as guns, opposition came our way at last. Jem was a bit independent at times, he offended some o' the rich gents one night he was a bit cross with the gout. They did not take to it kindly, and so, in the spring of 1815—I recollect it as well as yesterday—on went the Blue Bell, driven by old Gordon; and well hossed, too, it was. Ye see the swells could afford it, for they were big in foreign speculations, and news was news worth having then. Sometimes Jem had something; all coachmen and guards had a little bit later than the mails—got just when the bags were being made up; and as he wouldn't give this except at his own time or to his own lot, you can understand how he made a good few enemies. With a change of government these men calculated on getting hold of the mails, and so they did not grudge old Gordon good cattle. His coach was a bit lighter than ours most of the journeys, you can understand, and therefore he held somewhat of an advantage.

'We used to start from Glasgow at the foot of Nelson Street, and there was always as big a crowd to see us coming in again. There was no spicier-looking coach than the Highflyer between the North and London. She was chocolate in colour, picked out with red, washed and clean as a new pin always, for they knew their work at the Saracen's Head in the Gallowgate. We were a pretty smart couple, Jem and me, and I was not a wee bit vain maybe o' my red coat, my cockade, and my pistols, which some o' the wags said I was allowed to use when I met a prouder man than mysel. Not that they would have been worth a rap to anybody, for I generally had them stuffed with tow in case o' accidents. No much need for them on our road was there, at any rate, though the mails had been stolen further south on more than one occasion before that time. There was never much in a Scotch mail-bag going South, at any rate; Scotch siller doesn't go back to England, if it's true as they say that Scotchmen, when they go South, never go back. But I'm getting a bit off the road.

'Old Gordon contrived to beat us several times in the run up from Carlisle, and made the most of it. Hosses would be taken out, the coach rolled up, the yard as smart as possible, all in ten minutes after arrival, and we would find everything washed down, and we'd find the old man himself drinking his rum-and-water, and looking out at the window as much as to say, "Here comes this old slow Highflyer at last! Wonder what ditch she's been layin' in." All this fairly worried Jem out of temper, and you'll imagine I was not too well pleased. Folks that came out to pick up bits of news from us didn't think it worth while waiting, and we were beginning to see that we were getting looked upon as old fogies, and not at all fit for our business. We both knew what that meant in time to come.

'"I'll tell ye what," says he to me one day, as we were jogging quietly into Carlisle, "we must do our best for sake of appearances, but I'm just beginning to think our hosses are getting a bit stale on the Glasgow end. I cannot make out right what it is. I have been looking at the oats and hay; they're all right, and they gets plenty of 'em, and the strappers seem up to their work, but still I can't manage it out of them, and if there's no powder in a pistol it don't matter a whiplash where you point the bullet."

'"Then what do you intend to do? Give up the road?"

'"Give up the road? give up the road, did ye say? and give in to a sneaking old psalm-singer like Gordon? No, no! You see if I don't bust him within the next six weeks, if not before. You can see the game he is playing, of course. Big Bogle and Finlay, and others of his backers, are interested in everything connected with the war on the Continent. Bad news or good news to them means a fortune, and Gordon is in their pay; two or three things which were neither in the *Sun* newspaper or the mail-bags he has fetched them; and so, of course, he can afford to have hosses which may not be better than ours in looks, but, when it comes to a real case of putting it to them, they beat us all to pieces. He gallops the whole of the Lanark stage from Carstairs down the valley of the Clyde, and gets out half an hour in us there from going over Bothwell Brig to Glasgow. Now the Duke of Hamilton, who came up with me on the box last week, says he will let me have two shifts of the best road-horses in England if I'll only be careful with them, as they are young, and he rather fancies the way I nurse along the young ones. Not much in that, maybe, but he likes it. All o' the hosses are three-parts bred. One of them is by a horse they called Lilliput by Pot-8-os, two by a dealer's road-horse by Filho-da-Puta, one by Sir Frederick Standish's Dalham by Diomed, and all of them well bred and clinkers. They'll all be at the stables in about ten days, and then Mr. Gordon, and Mr. Bogle, and Mr. Blue Bell Coach, you look out for a right good licking."

'"Yes, but Jem," says I, "what about the hosses? You'll have to send 'em back, and then we'll be as bad as ever—won't we?"

'"*No*, Jack! no! I can't just explain to ye on that point. The Duke won't mind lettin' the governor, Mr. Dickson o' the Saracen's Head, having them at a price. And mind ye, don't blow it. There's a big bit o' news expected every day about the war. Of course ye know Napoleon's got away from Elba, and is raising the devil again amongst the Frenchmen. Little Fleming of the Tontine, that sharp-nosed little fellow, has let the governor know that any time I can let him have a bit o' information half an hour afore Big Bogle and Finlay get hold of it he'll take over the lot. So you just wait."

'Well, things went on very much the same till we had two runs out of the blood horses, but old Gordon pretty well held his own. Ye see Jem had to keep his eye on the Duke, and dare not be seen galloping his horses down past Hamilton Palace. However, it was in the last week o' June or beginning of July that he whispers to me as we left Carlisle, "We'll bust the Blue Bell this run, Jack." He had been away drinking with a lot o' brother-whips when I was looking over the way-bill. "Don't ax me now," he said. "Mum's the word. And mind you don't get talkin' to these two chaps on the roof. They won't tell you or me what I know they're thinking of."

'We got out of Carlisle sharp to the minute, and commenced to rattle along past Longtown at a rare pace. Both passengers kept as quiet as a deaf-and-dumb hedgehog when there's an old fox prowling about, and Jem would say nowt to me either till we got to Moffat. There, when we changed horses, he slipped into the stable and wrote (for he had a bit o' eddication) something on the back of a Highflyer way-bill. The words he wouldn't let me see, but rolled it up and gave it to one of the strappers, an old post-boy, who all the time was buckling the girths of a saddle on to one of our fastest changes, a mare by Highflyer, the other man drawing out one of the best of our old lot which was fit and fresh. While the passengers were feeding, the horse was slipped out at the back and mounted, and horseman and steed quickly disappeared, the last direction given to him being not to spare his horse, and give the message to no one but Mungo Fleming, merchant, the Tontine Coffee Room, Glasgow. The old madman, as I thought him at the time, then borrowed some ribbons from the barmaid and commenced to tie them to his whiplash, saying all the time, "I have got you this

"Wallington's licked Boney & I've licked Jamie Gordon"

see page 2

afternoon, Mr. Gordon, and no mistake, and settled you and your sneaking messages to the merchants of Glasgow."

'"Don't you think it would be time enough, Jem," I said, "to hang up your decorations when you felt that victory was made quite secure, old man? Seems to me you are holding old Gordon as cheap this trip as a herring-hawker."

'"Ha, ha!" was his answer; "you'll see. You make up your mind for a headache in the mornin', that's all."

'We were soon over Bothwell Brig, and in half an hour were rattling along the Gallowgate to Glasgow Cross, where were assembled, as usual, a large crowd waiting the news. "Now then, Jack," came the call, "give us something military on that 'ere key-bugle o' yours"—I preferred the key-bugle to the horn—"something that will rouse them from one end of the town to the other."

'I gave them Marlborough's March with the accompaniments, and as I finished the old man stood up on the box and flourished his ribbon-clad whip just as he flung the reins to the grooms, and shouted at the full pitch of his voice,—

'"Wallington's licked Boney, and I've licked Jamie Gordon and the Blue Bell coach!"

'You never heerd such cheering in your life. The last I saw of Jem was him being carried into the hotel shoulder high. And so that was his secret, which, rightly divining that our passengers were special messengers, he had posted on to Fleming, who, I may tell you, was as good as his word. When the Blue Bell came the news was old, and men had drunk success to Wellington and Jem Robinson, and the good old Highflyer for ever!'

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

THE Legend of the Black Loch relates, in choice flowing verse, the adventures of three salmon-fishers, who essay to fish the Black Loch, the gates of which are for ever guarded (so runs the Legend) by two monster black bull-trout. The blood of the angler will stir within him as he reads the account of the prolonged fight with a monster fish, and will feel anxious to know the size and weight of the trophy; but alas! it is not to be, for—

'Onward, yet ever onward; further, yet further, till
The last yard's gone; the music of the reel is hushed and still.
Hoping the strain terrific on rod and line to slack

The rower strives with desperate power
In vain. Lower bends the rod, and lower,
Then upward flies, and all is o'er,
The line comes slowly back.'

And now the sympathies of experienced anglers will go with the three defeated and dejected fishermen—

'As on through mist and driving rain
We pass in lengthy file.'

This charming poem is written with refined humour by H. Cumberland Bentley, and the eighteen illustrations are daintily reproduced from the pencil of Wycliffe Taylor. Messrs. Fores, Piccadilly, are the publishers.

W. & G. ASHFORD AND WINDER, of Birmingham, have recently patented a *Dog-lead and Collar combined*, which can be used at will as a lasso or dog-catcher, and can be made, if desired, with a special catch, which allows the dog to be quickly slipped. It is made in various sizes and patterns to suit terriers, pet dogs, collies, spaniels, retrievers, mastiffs, &c., and will be found specially useful for taking up spaniels and retrievers when shooting, and for ladies to catch and lead their dogs when required. It is cut out of best bridle-butts, and the furniture nickel plated; and is altogether the simplest and least expensive arrangement that can be imagined.

IT will come as a surprise to most driving men when they are told that hitherto horses have been steered from the wrong end; however, so says Mr. Serjeant, who has discovered that the said animal's tail is a more effective position than his head whereunto the reins should be affixed. To a ring attached to the crupper he fastens the ends of the reins, which are then guided through rings arranged on each side of his body to the bit, through the rings of which they are carried and returned to the hands of the driver. By this plan the inventor claims the only way of perfectly controlling the animal is attained, and that by its adoption the most vicious and tricky horses are held in thorough subjection, and are incapable of kicking, jibbing, or bolting—in fact, the more persistently they attempt these vagaries the sooner are they conquered. A recent trial of vicious horses on Wimbledon Common appeared to prove the truth of the assertion that this is a real '*Safety Rein.*'

"Rolling Napper and his horse over"

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FORES'S
SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

OLD OXFORD DAYS.—The Elder Brother.

By 'PECKWATER.'

CHAPTER I.

IT was in George Neville's rooms in B. N. C. that four men, in hunting costume, and impatient for breakfast were driving the 'cute and obliging scout nearly wild by their demands for grill, which he was preparing with all possible speed at his master's fire, for they were eager to be at the meet of the Heythrop Hounds. They were going to drive to the meet, and a leader would be hooked on at Somertown, thus they hoped to do the distance, some seventeen miles, well under the hour and a half.

Lord Redesdale, the then master would often give the 'Boys' a few minutes law, for he knew at these far-off meets none but genuine sportsmen would be present from the University.

At length a dish of broiled fowl and sausages was placed on the table, dressed according to Neville's home recipe. Then the letters were brought in, and amongst them one for George Neville. 'From my brother,' he said, opening the letter, 'and he never writes unless there is some trouble or other'—he read on hurriedly. 'Oh! confound it. I can't go with you now to Bradwell Grove. What a nuisance!—my horse sent on, and the last meet there for this season!'

'You can tell my man to come quietly home, unless you, Barlow, would like to indulge in the luxury of a second horse, if so, ride the Dandy by all means, he is perfect in a stone wall country—'

'Nothing serious the matter, I hope,' said Barlow.

He knew the Squire intimately, and was aware how anxious George was as to his elder brother's proceedings.

'Read his letter,' replied George, 'nay read it out, and you will all see what a fix I'm in.'

Barlow then read as follows :—

'DEAR GEORGE,—

'The Rockington Hunt Steeplechases come off on Wednesday next ; bring your mare Victress down at once. I have entered her in the hunt chase, for which she is qualified. I'm in a regular hole, and stand some thousands against a dark horse of old Melford's (you know what a sly old dog he is), and I have backed you against him for a place. Mind, don't fail me, take French leave if the Dons cut up roughly. It isn't the loss of the cash I care about, so much as being done. You can get here to-night, rest to-morrow, and the mare will be fit for Wednesday. I saw she won the Marlbury Hunt Chase last week, so she must be in pretty good form.

'Your affectionate brother, HARRY.

'GEORGE NEVILLE, Esq., B.N.C., Oxford.'

'Of course you must go, but what a nuisance!' was the unanimous verdict of the friends.

They then got on their overcoats, and with hurried farewells and good wishes jumped into the dog-cart.

Barlow took Neville aside for a moment, for a few last words, 'I'll slip down to Rockington on Wednesday,' he said. 'But the Melfords have got the Squire, depend upon it. I know the old man and that hopeful son of his, with his crew of followers, and they'll win in some way, I fear. Remember me to the Squire, and tell him for heaven's sake to put the brake on—and mind that man Beresford, of Magdalen, who has taken up his abode at the Grange ; he sticks at nothing and owes you a grudge, so keep your eyes open. Good-bye, George!' and they were off.

Neville at once sent directions to Symond's stables to have his mare Victress saddled ready for him in an hour, then with his scout's assistance packed his portmanteau, which, with his racing saddle and the mare's clothing, was to be sent by the 'Telegraph' coach, for the rail was not open yet. He then took off his pink and spurs, donned a loose great coat, slipped a pair of overalls over his breeches and boots, and with cap and gown proceeded to his tutor's rooms to obtain leave of absence for a few days 'on urgent private affairs,' which he was delighted to obtain without difficulty.

Victress was a capital roadster, and walking and jogging along they passed through the village of Wellesboro' in good time in the afternoon, and another mile would bring them to the drive leading up to the Grange, his old home, now held by his elder brother Harry.

The Squire had been in possession of the estate about two years, he had been at Christ Church, but left the university on reaching his majority; he had made tolerably strong running during his two years of residence, and the authorities were by no means dissatisfied at his taking his name off the college books. At first Henry Neville had implicitly followed the advice of his guardians, Colonel Charlton and Major Fulworth, two most popular men in the county, good all-round sportsmen and gentlemen of the old school.

To Colonel Charlton's only daughter Edith, the most charming girl of that countryside, he had been engaged some time, and all for a time went well. Then came a change o'er the spirit of his day dreams, and the young landowner embarked on that voyage of pleasure and excitement which needs clever pilotage to avoid Scylla on one tack and Charybdis on the other. His proceedings had occasioned great disappointment to his friends, and Edith Charlton had begun to doubt the wisdom of her choice. Yet everybody liked the Squire, '*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*' might have been his motto, but the general opinion seemed to be that he was going to the deuce as fast as it was possible to reach the terminus over which that spirit of evil presides. A most objectionable companion in the person of Ralph Beresford had recently fastened upon him, and had become the leading genius of the Wellesboro' Grange establishment. Beresford had been at Oxford while the Squire was up, and had remained there on and off for some time afterwards without taking his degree. He was a man of the highest abilities and possessed accomplishments which proved attractive in all circles of society. An inveterate gambler, his own small fortune had been scattered to the winds, and now it only remained for him to seek whom he might devour; to Harry Neville he therefore stuck like a leech.

> 'Nec missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo.'
>
> 'Till fully gorged the leech won't leave the skin
> While there remains a drop of blood within.'

The house was, as usual, full of visitors, most of them youngsters ready for any diversion, and who, of course, regarded the Squire as the best fellow in creation.

George Neville had just cleared the village when a well-known figure met his eye—he had hoped and half expected he might get a glimpse of his old fellow-pupil, Gertrude Hastings, and now just in front of him there she was, walking homeward, but not with that free elastic gait which so well accorded with the usual high spirits and vigour of this beautiful girl.

Owing to an accident, George had been for two years the private pupil of Doctor Brownlow, Gertrude's uncle, who had been a famous 'coach' at Oxford, and had married, but after the early death of his wife had settled down in childless seclusion near Wellesboro'. His sister's orphan daughter had been confided to his charge, and Gertrude became his sole companion and pupil, until he was induced to undertake the charge of George Neville.

Gertrude's life of hard study was beginning to tell tales, her powers were evidently being overtaxed, but when George appeared upon the scene all this was changed; he had received an injury at football which for some time would prevent his indulging in any exertion other than on horseback. Gertrude at once became his companion in his rides, and thus boy and girl, thrown together, grew to be fond companions and fellow-students, and when George departed for Oxford his heart told him that he had left behind him an object dearer to him than a sister.

In a few moments George had overtaken the pensive maiden, dismounted, and was at her side before she was aware of his approach.

'Gertrude, dear! this is a pleasure I hardly hoped for,' he exclaimed.

The startled girl turned quickly round, overcome by joy and surprise, then an expression of sadness spread over her sweet face, and she almost withdrew the hand George had clasped in the eagerness of their first meeting.

'What does this mean, Gertrude?' said George in great perplexity at the distant and troubled demeanour of his companion. 'I thought to give you such a pleasant surprise, and you will hardly speak to me.'

'Oh, George, I don't know how to act,' she almost sobbed, and then recovering herself, but with tears which George longed to kiss away, she tried to explain how matters stood. At length she spoke more firmly, 'My Uncle wishes that our intimacy should cease; he intends to speak to you on the first opportunity.'

'I am sure, Gertrude, whatever may be your Uncle's commands, you will not allow yourself to condemn me unheard, George replied indignantly, he then asked, 'Are you aware on what information your Uncle has been acting, and what is the nature of the charge he brings against me?'

Gertrude was now very much embarrassed; at last, blushing deeply, she said—'It was from information furnished by Mr. Beresford, a friend of your brothers—'

'What! are you acquainted with that man?' cried George, in extreme disgust.

'He was introduced to me at Colonel Charlton's, and my Uncle has a very high opinion of him. I'm sure he is a man of most cultivated tastes, accomplished—'

'An accomplished scoundrel!' interposed George, in great wrath, 'and this you may discover to your cost; however, I beg of you to suspend your judgment as to myself.' They now had reached Dr. Brownlow's gate, and George reluctantly bid his fair companion farewell, 'I shall call on Dr. Brownlow on Thursday,' he said, as he rode away; and in doubt and anxiety he finished his long ride. If he had only remembered the episode of one Lizzie Parsons and her mother, he need not have been at a loss as to the scandal Beresford had circulated concerning him, which can be explained in a few words.

Ned Parsons, a small tenant on the Wellesboro' property was one who thought more of sport and jollification than business, and after failing as a farmer, became landlord of an inn on the river some distance above Oxford, much frequented by boating men and others additionally attracted by the beauty of his daughter Lizzie, who waited on the customers. Among the visitors to the place was Beresford, who had so completely won the affections and ministered to the vanity of this girl, that she had consented to elope with him, believing his assurance that she should return home as Mrs. Beresford. The father about this time succumbed to the effects of hard drinking, and the widow found herself burdened with debt, and without the means of joining her son in the New Zealand home he had offered them, which was now their only refuge. Mrs. Parsons was a woman far superior in every way to her husband, and had tried all she could to bring up her daughter as a respectable well-behaved girl; she had warned her against listening to Beresford's protestations, but without effect. George Neville knew that the Parsons had settled here, and often called to see how they were getting on, and Mrs. Parsons in her grief had confided her troubles to him, and her anxiety to remove her daughter from the neighbourhood. He, therefore, in his generous manner, advanced the money requisite for the passage to New Zealand, and when Beresford returned fully prepared to carry off his prize, he found that mother and daughter had vanished, and learned that George Neville had been instrumental in their disappearance. To revenge himself on the 'sanctified prig,' as he styled him, he proceeded to spread a report that Neville had taken Lizzie under his protection, and that the mother and daughter instead of having left England, were living in the country near Woodstock at George's cost. He had also conveyed the same idea to Dr. Brownlow, and had raised that good man's wrath and indignation against his unworthy pupil to such a pitch, that he was determined that the intimacy between George and his niece should be summarily ended. Beresford had been so much struck by the beauty of Gertrude, coupled with the fact of her possessing some ten thousand pounds in her own right, that he at once conceived the idea of making her his wife, and so well had he conducted his scheme, that he had entirely won over the uncle, and had made a most favourable impression on the niece.

CHAPTER II.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that George acted as a wet blanket during the usual evenings festivities—he had, indeed, abundant food for melancholy thoughts; in addition to his anxiety regarding Gertrude he had been obliged to listen to a catalogue of his brother's follies. The Squire had allowed himself to become intimate with a set of sporting men known as the 'Melford clique,' and as a consequence had been the victim of a regular plant. Mr. Melford, senior, was a small landed proprietor in the county, he kept a few horses in training at home, and generally had a useful second-rate 'hunter' or two with which he managed to pick up stakes at minor meetings. He had bought his own cleverness dearly as a young man, and now was little better than a sharping horse coper. His son Charley was head trainer and jockey, and fancied himself the cleverest youth in the kingdom; he had been articled to a local attorney, and had acquired a measure of caution which, with his natural shrewdness and low sporting experiences, qualified him not only to hold his own, but to possess himself, by fair or foul means, of a share of his neighbours' belongings.

During the winter a slashing-looking grey horse had been ridden with the various packs in the district by a sporting farmer, who was always in very low water, named Ted Napper; the horse was brought out in the rough, with an old saddle and rusty bridle, and his rider took care not to show him off in any way, he therefore attracted little notice, and was looked upon as a cheap purchase of the farmer's, with a screw loose somewhere.

At the late Warwick meeting the Squire had gone further than usual in his devotions to the bottle, and got mixed up with the Melford division, and one evening the Rockington Hunt chases were led up to by old Melford.

'We shall have a poor entry for our Hunt Chase, I fear,' he said. 'I think I shall enter that rough five-year-old of mine Ted Napper has been riding, just for practice.'

'What that grey brute?' remarked the Squire.

'Aye!' said old Melford quietly.

'I'll lay odds he don't win; will you take four to one, Melford?'

'What in?'

'Thousands if you like,' laughed the Squire.

'Done!' was the old 'un's reply, pulling out his book, 'I'll enter four thousand to one thousand against my grey horse, Gamecock.'

'Right!' shouted the Squire in high glee—'and I'll back my brother's mare, Victress, against him for another 'thou.' in their places, one to win.'

This bet was also booked, and the wagers were read out by old Melford to the admiring circle who had now clustered round the table.

Now this shabby-looking grey was a thoroughbred, which Melford had lately tried and found good enough to go for the Grand National in another year, he had been doing regular work all the season and was only ridden to hounds to qualify. All this soon became known, and odds had consequently changed to four to one on Gamecock for the Hunt Chase.

These and other particulars had been imparted to George by Major Fulworth who was now staying at the Grange.

Of course the reported scandal about George Neville soon became public property, and speedily came to the ears of Colonel Charlton and his daughter Edith, the latter of whom took the earliest opportunity of driving over to have some private talk with her friend. When alone with Gertrude, before dressing for dinner, Edith remarked abruptly, 'I wish that Mr. Beresford was in penal servitude; I am sure he deserves it.'

'Edith!' exclaimed Gertrude in surprise, 'A gentleman of his great talents and accomplishments. I'm sure you are mistaken in him.'

'I know that you and your uncle are, and before long he will ask you to be his wife; this I know, as I said. Now don't interrupt, but answer me: has not Beresford told your Uncle some tale about George Neville and a Mrs. Parsons and her daughter?'

'He has,' answered Gertrude in some confusion.

'And if it is true,' she continued, 'George Neville is not a fit associate for me or any other right-minded girl—'

'Do you believe that George has acted as Beresford declares?' Edith asked sternly.

Gertrude hesitated.

'Ah! I see you have succumbed to the fascinations of this lady killer,' Edith laughed scornfully.

'No! no! don't say that of me,' Gertrude implored in great agitation, 'but when my Uncle was convinced, what could I think?'

'An old fool!' cried Edith, 'here, read this, it is a letter from Mrs. Parsons to my father, written on her leaving England with her daughter, you can also show it to your Uncle.'

Colonel Charlton had had the active management of the estate during the Squire's minority, and had treated the Parsons with great kindness, hence the widow wrote to him informing him of what George had done for them, and expressing her gratitude in being able to place her daughter out of the reach of Beresford, who had planned her ruin.

Poor Gertrude! her distress and self-upbraidings were painful to witness and listen to, and Edith became quite alarmed at the vehemence of her grief.

'Dear, good George!' she at length sobbed, 'how could I have doubted you? Knowing your true and generous nature I shall never dare to meet you again.'

'You dear, sorrowful little goose!' cried Edith, 'he loves you better than any one. You can easily repair the injustice you have done him—one little word will be enough—if you are not already in love with the *accomplished* Mr. Beresford.'

'How can you be so cruel as to make such insinuations?' poor Gertrude remonstrated, again relapsing into tears. 'Such an idea never entered my head; he has always treated me most respectfully, and I was glad to have his assistance in my reading.'

'Pooh! he knew how to get at your weak side; why he had the audacity to pay his fulsome compliments to me, after managing to let me know how much he disapproved of his friend, Harry Neville's proceedings, especially his attentions to that handsome Mrs. Scrivener, the lawyer's wife. Pah! even though I found my idol had more clay in his composition than generous metal, I was not going to betray my disappointment to such a traitor as that.'

* * * * *

At six o'clock on the morning of the race, George Neville was in his mare's box, and having satisfied himself that she had passed a good night, he gave her an hour's walk and a steady canter or two in the park, and then began to think about his own breakfast. His brother's stud-groom received instructions as to the route to be taken to reach the course, with the view of keeping her away from the crowd, and the race being fixed for 3.30 there was no hurry. 'I will come and saddle her away from the people, for she will not stand being bustled,' with these injunctions George made his way to the breakfast table, keen and hungry as a waggoner, after which he and Major Fulworth drove off early to walk over the ground; the course was an old-established one, over a really fair hunting country. A slight contraction of it was necessary at the turn towards home, and a turning flag was placed in the field so as to give a fair sweep round when making the turn, to which Barlow, who had joined the party, called George's especial attention, and George was delighted to have his advice, which, from his extensive practice in steeplechase riding, was worth following.

'If you should be leading, mind this turning flag. In the larger circle of the old course it is not needed, and it is just the place at which to make a mistake.' These admonitions of the 'Captain's,' as he was styled, George made a note of, and subsequently discovered their value. They then drove to Major Fulworth's to luncheon, and on the road they met the formidable Melford division.

'Been over the course?' asked Charley Melford, who was 'got up' tremendously, and looked the insufferable little cad he was.

'Shan't we have the pleasure of seeing you in the pigskin, Captain Barlow; you generally ride in our Hunt race?' he drawled out.

'Well, no! I heard of your awful pot or I should have entered one. You will, I suppose, have virtually a walk over?' Barlow answered.

'Y-aas! it's a fairish horse—rather above hunter form, Mr. Neville. Good morning!' and with that tip as a parting shot they each drove on.

The Rockington Chases were the occasion of a general gathering of the whole countryside, and to-day was no exception to the rule. The Squire's drag was there, with all his visitors, and a sumptuous luncheon awaiting them. The Charlton's carriage stood next, then an open carriage belonging to Lawyer Scrivener, in which his wife was seated in all her glory, and a remarkably pretty woman she was, as a large circle of admirers testified by the attention they paid her; all stood back, however, when Squire Neville appeared making his way through the throng, and entered into confidential chat with the lawyer and his wife.

Scrivener always had a good horse for himself and his wife to ride, and was a keen sportsman—or we should more correctly say *sporting man*:—he had the command of any amount of cash, and the Squire had already applied to him for advances, and particularly for the sum of five thousand pounds, with which to cover the amount of his bets with Melford, for which the old man required that the money should be staked. The lawyer must have laughed in his sleeve when the Squire made this request for a loan, for the day before old Melford had come to him on a similar errand, at least he came to be supplied with the necessary cash, for the grey horse was the lawyer's property, and Melford was merely the jackal, and would enjoy a very small share of the plunder. With admirable assurance the lawyer addressed his client. 'I fear Mr. George's mare hasn't much chance with Melford's grey, Squire!' he remarked in course of conversation. 'Sly old fox! he took us all in. Ha, ha!'

'It serves me right for mixing with such a set of sweeps,' the Squire answered savagely.

'Mr. George may win yet. I do hope he may,' Mrs. Scrivener said with her sweetest smile. Her husband had not told her the secret, he never did confide to her anything connected with his racing speculations. He gave her a momentary glance as if to say, 'I wish you may get it,' and the Squire went off to do his duty at Colonel Charlton's carriage. Edith saw him leave Mrs. Scrivener's company, she just returned his salutation, and said unconcernedly, 'We have come to this game of flats and sharps, you see; I wish you well through it,' and went on talking to some one else.

George then came up to the party; Gertrude was so nervous she could hardly speak to him, her manner was differently interpreted by him, for George attributed her embarrassment to her wish to keep him at a distance, but when he said it was time for him to go and dress, Gertrude spoke in a hurried whisper, 'Oh! I hope you will get safely through this—pray see me to-morrow without fail—good-bye.'

These few words acted like magic. George Neville now felt a different man, and when he was mounted on his good honest mare, he laughed with joy as he patted her neck and told her she must do her best; he felt he had already won the stake on which he would have pledged his life, and all other considerations were now absorbed in this one victory.

Two races had been decided, next came luncheon, and then the Hunt Steeplechase. The course was lined with drags and carriages, and all seemed freed from every restraint and care. A good honest mare was Victress, and she was a perfect hunter, which is all that could be said of her; but when you saw the grey take his canter, you said at once there gallops a racehorse. Six others were entered, as there was a prize for the second, and these included a weedy thoroughbred ridden by Ted Napper, started as a reserve to take care of the Squire's brother.

Barlow walked to the starting-post with George: 'You have a chance now,' he said, 'Charley Melford is half-seas over; he has just spoken to me, forgetting he had seen me this morning.'

Young Melford was a fine horseman, no doubt, but he lived a life that would ruin the nerve of the strongest. His father little thought that a glass of neat brandy was indispensable before this popular favourite could face a country, but this day he had taken more than one, and Scrivener was aware of it.

'What, can't you ride without priming?' the lawyer had said to him in disgust.

'Oh! it's all right,' was the shaky answer, and he trotted on to the starting-post.

The race needs little description. Gamecock simply cantered in front with a lead of ten or a dozen lengths, which he could have increased to a field or two whenever called upon, and thus they proceeded, the grey fencing superbly; he had been admirably schooled by Ted Napper, who did not value his own neck at the worth of a spoilt postage stamp.

But now the field in which is placed the turning flag is reached, the grey's lead increases every stride; George Neville is lying second, suddenly he hears a shout behind him, 'Stop! stop! you've missed the flag,' it is Ted Napper's holloa, but he may as well have tried to stop an express. On went the grey, his rider had clean forgotten the new feature in the course; he could not now have pulled up his horse in time to rectify his error, even if he had noticed it when he came with such a sudden turn at the fence next before him. The rest of the field led by George went round the flag, where was standing Major Fulworth, who shouted, 'All right, George! I'll wait till you return!' The gallant major had decided to take up his position here in case of any dispute occurring.

Ted Napper's maledictions were audible to those about him, and he was not long in bringing his reserve into action; he now raced up to George, got a slight lead of, and at the next fence pulled straight across him. His horse rose at the fence crosswise, and as he did so George, with Victress, caught him broadside on. The mare being well in hand, with her hind legs under her, had the best of the collision, rolling Napper and his horse over into the next field with a thud which knocked both clean out of time, and left Mr. Napper senseless on the ground, from whence he was carried to the stand on a hurdle, unconscious of the disaster that had befallen him and his party.

Loud shouts greet young Melford as he gallops in alone, then follows George on Victress, an easy second.

'Bravo!' cried old Melford, running up to his son as he turned his horse round, 'we've landed it and no mistake this time,' he chuckled.

But what is this cry of 'Objection?' Yes, it's in everyone's mouth as the grey is led back to scale.

As soon as George had passed the post he turned quickly round, and with Barlow at his side trotted back to the paddock and weighed in. 'All right, 12 stone, 2 lb. for curb bridle,' shouted the clerk. He then went to the stewards' stand, and said hurriedly, 'I object to Gamecock for missing the turning flag, and claim the race for Victress;' all the other riders corroborated.

'Here's the five pounds,' said Barlow, handing a note to the stewards.

It was useless for old Melford to bluster and for Charley to protest with tears running down his cheeks, that he had gone the right course.

The Stewards determined to judge for themselves; they therefore went to the turning field, where they found Major Fulworth, evidently expecting them, and there they saw the tracks of one horse taking a short cut across the field, which the Major declared were those of Gamecock. The evidence was irresistible, and they announced that Victress was the winner of the stake.

To describe the scene that followed is impossible, old Melford in his fury seized his son by the throat, and would have strangled him had he not been forced from the paddock by his friends. So violent was he that they drove him from the ground and to his home, to which he was for weeks confined, in a state which rendered it doubtful if he would ever see a racecourse again. It was ludicrous in the extreme to watch the countenance of Lawyer Scrivener, when, in his wife's presence, he was seconding her warm congratulations to the Squire on his unexpected success, for he was the real victim of young Melford's blunder, and it required all his powers of dissimulation to carry off his disappointment successfully.

George was of course the hero of the moment. He was, however, unable to receive the congratulations of Edith and Gertrude, as they had driven from the course as soon as the hunt race had been decided.

Space does not admit of our relating how the victory was celebrated by the youngsters on their return to the Grange. George was glad to escape their uproarious demonstrations, being resolved to avoid a collision with his brother's friend, Beresford; he therefore retired with Major Fulworth to spend the evening quietly. Next morning he called upon Dr. Brownlow, who fully acknowledged his own error, and did ample justice to George's conduct in the whole affair.

Gertrude pleaded for forgiveness for having allowed a doubt of her old friend's integrity to enter her mind, and need we write that her sweet entreaties were freely granted, and that she in her turn had to make a promise, which sent George back to Oxford resolved to waste his time no longer, but to prove himself worthy of the noble heart he had won.

TATTERSALL'S, PAST AND PRESENT.

By 'H. H.'

AMONGST the many recollections that crowd upon one is the day much to be remembered of the annual Quorn sale during the years of Mr. Coupland's mastership, and great indeed was the crowd that came together either to see or bid for the horses that had carried the master and men of that famous hunt across its spreading pastures. Great also was the price the horses made as a rule, for every one knew right well that it was no joke to carry any one of the party over Leicestershire fences and at Leicestershire pace, and that those horses which could do it were worth 'any money.' You would expect weight-carriers to be in strong demand when you saw three such sons of Anak in the hunting world as Lord Macclesfield, master of the South Oxfordshire, Mr. George Lane Fox, of the Bramham Moor, and the first Lord Lonsdale, better known as Colonel Lowther, then master of the Cottesmore, chatting together in the centre of the yard, and might at the same time lay your life that their talk smacked of hound and horn. Equally would you say that riding and horses that could go the pace and do the trick were to the front when Captain Middleton forgathered with Captain Soames and Timber Powell, while the probability would suggest itself that the late Major Whyte Melville was saying some good things to the attentive group gathered round him. Indeed, those who knew him well bear witness that he seldom spoke without so doing, for assuredly his conversation was as sparkling as his verse. Nor would he hesitate to let you hear a joke, even if it was against himself, for once talking about hounds to us on Winsford Hill, he said, 'I am a bad hand at remembering either them or their names, and Colonel Anstruther Thomson, when he had the Pytchley, used to say to me, "George, you only know one hound in the pack, and you only know him one side."' Alas, that we must write of him also as one 'who was.' So we may say of Mr. James Hall, whose name was for so many years associated with the Holderness, where he had such a stud of horses as few in England could match, and perhaps one man never sent three such horses into the ring in one class as he did when the Yorkshire Show was held at Beverley in 1869, and the curiously-named Stomachache and his companions opened the eyes of hunting men. Near him you would have seen Lords Dacre, Valentia, and Coventry, all noted for knowledge as well as love of the chase, and with them Lord Shannon who, strange to say, only took to the sport when nearing middle-age, and then managed to make a name in it. Sir Watkin Wynn, was also good to know in a crowd, although a certain bagman did once go near to mistaking the identity between him and another person, not generally named to ears polite during a railway-journey through Wales, when to every question of the loquacious bagman as to whose property they were travelling through the invariable rejoinder was 'mine.'

'What strong Pytchley reminiscences Mrs. Arthur (as we saw her there) brought back, still more intensified by Mr. Daniels, of Misterton, and who could see Mr. John Gore, another lost from amongst us, and Mr. Tailby, without being transported in spirit to Market Harborough and High Leicestershire? while Captains Cotton and Pritchard Rayner recall the North Warwickshire country with equal force, and once more we are striving for a start from Hill Morton Covert or Cook's Gorse; while, of course, Mr. Coupland occupies the place of honour beside the auctioneer. Of dealers on such occasions there were enough to make half a directory, and where shall we find one genial and hospitable as the late John Darby, of Rugby, whose conversation of an evening, when he got on to his old world stories, was like a page out of the 'Druid,' only no book that ever was written could give the quaint, dry humour with which the anecdotes were seasoned as you heard them by the Church Street fireside? His low-crowned hat and brown overcoat was as certain to be seen there as the sale came round, and it was more than even betting that close at his elbow was old Dan Seffert, who rode Moonraker in the St. Alban's Steeplechase when he beat Grimaldi, and Mr. Mostyn. Few men could talk more sensibly of horses and riding than poor old Dan, who in those his latter days dearly delighted to fight his battles over again, and tell of his larks with Bill Bean, General Charratie, and others. Never will the yard see again the neat get-up of George Rice, subdued, nay, almost clerical in manner, while as to costume, his black riding coat and patent leather Napoleons might have led you to mistake him for a wealthy rector just returned from the chase in a dry March day, for no one ever saw a speck of dirt about them. Always near the rostrum, and generally in deep consultation with some great gun, he appeared to take life and its duties far too seriously for idle chat or chaff with his brother dealers did Mr. Sago, of 'Tilbury Nogo' fame. Newcome Mason also would be there making his three hundred guinea bids for horse after horse that took his fancy as they came under the hammer, and what was more getting them knocked down to him into the bargain. He was a great ally of the Hon. Robert Grimston, who went to see him every Sunday, and left his son a legacy. Charley Symonds, of Oxford, also, who genial and chatty as he was, looked wiser than any man who ever lived, except perchance Lord Thurlow, when in a serious mood, albeit he was not so clever but that he lost what he made by dealing in backing horses, and had a subscription raised for him by his old clients at last. Sure to greet your eye was the merry glance of Fitz-Oldaker, of Woodbank, Gerrards Cross, a first-class judge, a fine rider, and one who could fit a hunting saddle better than any man in England, and, moreover, took a pride in doing it. Nor must we forget Charley Wise, of Eton, the cheeriest of stag-hunters, who discoursed by the hour of old-world doings with Charles Davis and the Queen's, and how he once went to France in charge of some hounds; no more popular man lives, for happily he is still in the flesh, although long illness keeps him at home. Mr. Banks, of Gray's Inn Lane, is another veteran who was much respected and is greatly missed, as is Peter Thrales, who always drove up from Croydon, and, we believe, like Col. Sibthorpe, never went by train; he has long handed the business over to his son and ceased to attend.'

Of those now in the flesh George Darby, who still sells the same stamp of horse for which his brother was so famous at Rugby, at Hill Morton, Toynbee of Sloane Street and East Acton, Woodlands, &c., &c., were then to the fore. As a matter of course Tom Firr was there to take a last look at his old favourites, and hard by him would be Frank Beers, and Gillard of the Belvoir. Great prices at times did the Quorn horses make, as we have seen three of the lot knocked down at three hundred a-piece, and then the slashing Ward Union beat them by seventy, and Traverser, a very grand-looking nag to be sure, was bought in, the reserve not being reached. Talking about price, we believe Mr. Albert Muntz, then of Birdingbury Hall, now of Dunsmore, made the highest one here at one of his annual sales for a grey mare called the Queen, in 1876, which was bought by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, who took her to Scotland to carry him, with Col. Buchanan's hounds, in Lanarkshire. The remark of a person close at our elbow, as she was led back, is worth recording. 'Well, there are fools about; what! 590 for *that thing?* but she must have been run up to make the others sell.' We naturally thought some new Daniel had come to judgment, as horses that can carry Mr. Muntz's weight to the front, and at the pace he sends them along, are not picked up for an old song or under every hedge; and looking round to see this new critic we found him to be a diminutive individual, who was evidently out for a holiday, and losing his way had wandered into Tattersall's; by his appearance we should have judged him to belong to that profession of which it takes nine to make one man. Certain it is the mare he so despised could have carried nine like him, and never felt her burden.

Although this, we believe, is the highest sale of late years, the palm for value, at any rate, belongs, we think, to Mr. Oakeley's celebrated white-faced brown horse, the Bald-faced Stag, by the Ugly Buck, who was twice bought in at the triennial sales of the Atherstone horses for 500 guineas or over; but then it must be remembered he carried his owner eleven seasons without ever giving him a fall or putting a foot wrong.

Very great days were those Atherstone sales, creating quite as much interest as the Quorn, for no one had or has a better stable of weight-carriers than the popular master of the Atherstone, who is no feather himself, and on such occasions his old friend and whilom partner in the hunt, Col. Anstruther Thomson, who knows what is wanted to take a big man over a big country, as well as any one in England, is pretty well sure to be in evidence, as was Mr. George Moore, of Appleby, whose horses we remember made a capital figure here after his decease.

Another character good to know at these sales was the Rev. George Inge, of Thorpe Hall, whose long, black coat and curiously-shaped hat sadly puzzled strangers to make out who or what he was, and we have seen more than one fairly staggered by the intelligence that he was not only a capital sportsman and fine rider, but that he did not stand for price when any horse that he fancied was in the market. Another who could not let anything worth having slip through his fingers for want of courage in buying was the late master of the Rufford, whose melancholy death caused such a wide-spread sorrow last spring, Mr Harvey Bayly; Mr. Henry Chaplin might usually be seen there when big horses came to the fore, while during his life Col. Chaplin was to be seen when coachers, as well as hunters, were to be disposed of. Nor must we forget Sir John Rae Reid, Captain Frank Sutton, and Mr. George Rennie. Mr. Hans Blackwood, of whom the Bald-faced Stag was bought, was sure to be in the yard on an Atherstone day if at no other time, as was Mr. Cunliffe Shaw, and equally sure to be seen was the late Mr. Henry Cartwright, so well known round Wolverhampton; he was here, there, and everywhere, and would leave Tattersall's to go to Wynnstay, on to York, and be back in London next day. By the way, it was over the Mute, one of Mr. Oakeley's horses, and a rare good-looking one to boot, that the battle of the eyes was waged and veterinary opinion divided into hostile camps, for while one party declared that he had incipient cataract, the other maintained as stoutly that he had not; how it was settled we cannot remember, nor does it matter, for doubtless long ere this the Mute has performed at his own funeral rites.

Let us turn from the hunters and take a sale of blood stock, although we must admit that since the Hampton Court and Middle Park sales proved such a success, fewer race-horses and yearlings have come to Albert Gate, Messrs. Tattersall's having generally disposed of them at their native stud farms; or at the sales during the different Newmarket Meetings. Yet we have seen such cracks as 'the mighty Gladiateur,' of the drooping quarter and fine forehand, the slashing Mortemer; and General, when he was looked upon as another avenger of Waterloo, undergo the ordeal here, and goodly crowds were there to witness their sale. 'The Admiral,' of course, was well to the fore at such times, while those who knew 'who was who' might easily spot the late Lord Falmouth and 'the landless Baronet,' as Sir Joseph Hawley was called; neither was the stalwart figure of the Duke of Hamilton bad to make out, or the slight one of 'the Marquis,' while Captain Machell was about those times just beginning to be a power in the racing world. Harry Hill, 'Mr. Howard,' and 'Lord Freddy' would probably come through from 'the Rooms' to see how things were going. Mr. Weatherby no one could mistake and near the arch it was a hundred to one but you ran against Mr. Christopher, and saw the Carshalton doctor leaning on that stick which, like another and yet more famous doctor, he took good care to make known he would use if occasion occurred. Our old friend 'Pavo' was certain to be in a position which gave him every chance, not only to note the biddings, but to catch every whisper of turf news as well, and equally quick were the ears, not to say eyes, of 'Argus,' who was termed the Jules Janin of the Sporting Press, while 'The Outsider' might have been seen exchanging notes with the original 'Man about Town,' whose witty and humorous knack of telling commonplace things never has been, and we venture to think never will be equalled. Another figure to be seen on such occasions is happily still with us, 'the Van Driver' of to-day; but Feist who, as 'Hotspur' and 'Augur' made the pages of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sporting Life* as gems in the eyes of racing-men, died all too soon. The rival commissioners of the *Sporting Life* and *Sportsman* pervaded the boxes, note-book in hand, and 'Orange Blossom' kept a sharp look out for anything better than common, especially if there were a Yorkshire pedigree behind it. Very similar, but yet with a difference, was the time when jumpers of eminence came to the fore, and although poor Jem Mason was a little before the time we write of, 'black Tom Oliver' was still pointed out to the novice, while Teddy Weaver's good-tempered countenance brought back thoughts of Bourton-on-the-Hill, and those cosy little meetings at Moreton-in-the-Marsh in which he, with Lord Coventry (who is also here) to back him up, took such an interest; George Stevens, T. Holman and Jemmy Adams would scarcely be absent. 'Mr. Thomas,' 'Mr. Edwards,' who met his sad fate at Liverpool, and for whom you would perchance mistake his brother of cricketing fame, and Captain Coventry may also catch your eye. Probably we have said enough for the 'Steeplechase cracks' themselves, when we say that we have seen Emblem and the Colonel led out from these boxes, not to mention a host of minor lights.

Yet another change of scene. It is the Thursday after the Derby, and the Hunt Servants' Annual Meeting is to take place. The Duke of Buccleuch (President of the Society) is to the fore, as well as several other hunting men not very often seen here; Lord Cork jumps from his carriage and passes into the subscription room, the Hon. Robert Grimston is talking in the outer yard to Mr. W. N. Heysham, who is busy getting subscriptions for the dinner afterwards, and Tom Drake, a rare sportsman and liberal man. Such names as Fenwick, Portman, Glyn, are often heard as you pass, and Mr. Mortimer, with a tea-rose in his buttonhole, and the Hon. Francis Scott, whom he is destined to succeed as treasurer, are near the entrance to the offices, which were then upstairs, discussing some proposed motion as if it were to be made in Parliament. Frank Goodall is issuing tickets for the dinner to the senior benefit members; Old John Dale is heartily greeting his son from the Burton, whose master, Mr. Foljambe, is chatting over the past season with Mr. Musters, who so well kept up the hunting traditions of the family at Quorn and Annesly. Frank Beers and Fred Cox seem as pleased to meet as if they were not near neighbours; while John Treadwell and Frank Gillard represent two distinct eras of Quorn management, and Tom Firr brings the line down to a still later date; Mr. Tattersall just looks in for a moment, and then leaves his partner, Mr. Pain, to represent the firm during the rest of the meeting, which, like a good run with hounds, is short, sharp, and decisive, no useless eloquence being indulged in; and then the subscription-room is once more given over to the care of Thomas, and the use of the layers and takers of odds until another year has run its course. Let us leave the past for the present, and stroll into the yard in this year of grace 1889, where, as far as it has gone, the hackney and polo pony reputation has been well kept up by Mr. Weston, whose beautiful mare Sensation made 155 guineas, and Mr. Beresford, who brought a choice lot from Ireland. A few old faces still greet us in the yard, not least known amongst them being Mr. 'Baron' Rawle, the worthy master of the Berkhampstead buck-hounds; 'Audax,' also we saw, busy as ever, although it was his first turn out after a nasty accident. Mr. H. Barnes, whilom of Andover, but now of Thornton Heath, is still to the fore, and Mr. Woodlands sticks to his old position under the rostrum as religiously as ever.

Being somewhat of the old school, we are not expected to know many of these who come to buy polo ponies, but we certainly miss the familiar face of Lord Airlie. Of course we need not remind our readers that Mr. Pain, we believe the only member of the firm who did not bear the name of Tattersall, passed away a few years ago. Most noticeable, though, is the presence in the rostrum of Mr. Somerville Tattersall, Mr. Edmund Tattersall's eldest son, who has already made his mark as a salesman, and from his urbanity to all is most deservedly popular. Legislators may not be hereditary, but the name of Tattersall confers distinction in his case as a worthy son of a worthy father. Mr. R. Rawlence we still see sometimes selling, and always making himself agreeable and useful; indeed that seems to be his mission not only here but at Rugby. Mr. Quallett occasionally looks in, and always has a joke for old friends, but does not now officiate as he formerly did.

Looking into the office we miss Mr. Peachy, who retired some time ago a martyr to gout, but Mr. Evans is still in his old place, though not looking so youthful as in the days these reminiscences first touch on. In the yard, Mike, who ran the horses out for so many years, and with whom Cherry Angell used to say Mr. John Gore had gone home to tea when he could not find him, is still to be seen, but nearly the last of the Mohicans, for there is only Charles Hagger of the old lot to keep him company, and another has taken his office. Hagger, who has whipped in to half the packs in England, looks like staying on, for he is very fresh still, and but little altered. Will Norton, there so many years, and always patronised by Hampshire men because he was the son of the old coachman of Mr. J. Wayne, of South Warnborough, is gone, and so is Dick the fat man, who was perhaps better known as 'Sir Roger,' a civil fellow and very active for his size. Last of all the tall, gipsy-looking man with a bridle on his arm is still looking for a job to take horses away; although a stranger would perhaps look twice ere trusting him to a small amount, horses of great value have, to our knowledge, been put in his care to convey through London, and right trustworthy he has proved. Now, having noted a few of the changes that a quarter of a century has brought about, we will lay down our pen.

TOUCH-AND-GO.

By WILF POCKLINGTON.

A RUNAWAY locomotive is a pretty bad thing to have on a railroad track, and the only chance to prevent the inevitable smash, is to chase it with another engine until it is overtaken. On the whole, however, I think that a runaway ice-yacht is worse, especially should it happen to carry a freight more precious than rubies, as did the one that I witnessed. Of course, in the record of a season over the whole country, there occurs a number of cases where ice-yachts get away, and finally reduce themselves to matchwood, or run into a large crack, but the instance I am about to relate is chiefly conspicuous because of its personal character.

Most of my English readers are, by this time, familiar with the American ice-yacht—that queer combination of ingenuity—which (barring its iron skate-blades) may be made out of a dry goods case, a plank, and a mast, or on the other hand, may be constructed replete with every elegance, and run into thousands of dollars. Briefly, it is a boat, the hull of which is a mere frame, except at the stern, where it is made into a box-like cock-pit for passengers; the rudder consists of a large blade of steel, on which the stern of the boat rests, clear of the ice; a beam runs through amidships, extending ten or twelve feet over each side, to each end of which is attached another large steel blade, so that, when on an even keel, running before the wind, the boat stands on the three blades, which are six to eight inches deep, and when she runs on a wind or reaches, she heels over, and one end of the beam naturally rises into the air, while the quaint hull runs on the other two blades. These queer craft will sail within three or four points of the wind, and, strange as it may seem, frequently travel faster than the wind that is blowing them.

We were spending some weeks of last winter on the land-locked bay of Shelter Island, L.I., one of the headquarters of ice-yachting, and close to the famous ducking grounds of the district, where most of the ducking is done by cutting large holes in the ice, placing an unlimited number of decoys, and laying under sheets suspended on ice hammocks, calling for birds, and waiting until they come within shot. Terribly cold work it is, and fond of shooting though I am, I infinitely preferred the ice-yacht, and its poetry of motion. Besides, there were races nearly every day, and the betting was exceedingly animated, so while the men of our party generally sought the ducks, I amused myself with the yachts and the ladies.

The bay was about three miles wide at its narrowest point, and twenty long, running out into the broad Atlantic, and this season the ice was good for fully sixteen miles of the way down; consequently sport was abundant.

One of our party was a southern lady, about eighteen years of age, who, although familiar with an ordinary yacht, was quite unused to the management of an ice-boat, which, owing to its high rate of speed, is rather trying to the nerves until one gets accustomed to it.

Nellie Fairfax belonged to one of the old Virginian Fairfax families, and was a great favourite with the boys, and being passionately fond of yachting, lost no opportunity of being a passenger in one of the competing boats, and so strangely did luck run, that the one she patronised generally turned out to be the winning boat; so frequently did this occur, that at last she became known as the 'Mascotte.'

Not being engaged in the earlier races, I was one day standing inside the club-house look-out, when a friend of mine stepped beside me, and looking at a race in progress, remarked, 'The Mascotte wins again.'

'Yes,' I returned, with a laugh. 'Miss Nellie is in great form this week, and if the boys keep their promises, which they doubtless will do, she will want a special freight-car to carry all her winning souvenirs down home. Every time she wins she gets a promise of something.'

As we spoke the race ended, and obeying her helm, the winning boat rounded an exquisitely graceful curve, and came up to the dock. I leaned out of the window, and after shouting my congratulations, said, 'Mind, you are promised to me for the next race but one, Nellie.'

She answered, 'Come down here, I want to ask you something. Please come.'

So obedient, as usual, I started down the stairs.

On the middle landing I met Bert Rosslyn, the finest ice-yacht captain of the club.

'You'll win to-day, old boy,' he said, 'the wind has just swung right round to the nor' west, and in five minutes will be blowing very fresh. Hallo! what's going on now?'

A hubbub of mingled laughter and shouted orders arose from below, in which I distinguished two words only—'Miss Fairfax.'

With a leap to the floor, and half-a-dozen strides, I was out on the piazza, and a single glance told me what was the matter.

That careless young scamp, Ryan, the owner of the winner of the last race, had brought his boat up to the dock, and instead of seeing that his main sheet was clear, and his boat properly hitched to the dock, had run into the club-house, leaving her simply lying alongside the dock, with Miss Fairfax sitting in the stern, awaiting his return for the next race, which she had promised to sail with him. The bay is notorious for these sudden changes of wind, which come up like a flash and last for several hours, with a succession of sharp, heavy puffs, against which it taxes a grown man's strength to hold the tiller, and requires tact and experience to weather. One of these squalls had blown up, and the sudden gust caught the yacht with sufficient force to veer her head round, and the main sheet jamming, the sail had filled, and away the boat glided with its fair occupant. Fifty voices yelled to her to put the helm down, or to let the sail run, but I felt that the girl was comparatively powerless, and knew that she could never manipulate the sheet in those heavy puffs of wind; all she could do was to keep the boat moderately straight.

I pushed my way through the crowd, ran to my own boat, and jumping in hauled up the sail. As she began to move, Bert Rosslyn and young Ryan jumped in, and in a minute or two we were in full chase, but alas, nearly half a mile astern. Ryan was in a terrible state of mind, and I had not the heart to censure him; while Rosslyn, standing out on the beam-head, had his glass out looking ahead.

'We shall have to do all we know to catch up with her,' he said, 'she is the fastest boat on the bay, and our only advantage is that we can sail our boat, while she has to run tied down. The trouble will be as to the direction the heaviest puffs will come from, for if one catches her broadside on, and the girl cannot bring her up in time, over they'll go, and at this rate of speed heaven alone can help her.'

We must have been running at the rate of nearly twenty-five miles an hour, and although a number of boats were skimming to and fro on our track with reefs down, they only thought we were racing, and so kept out of our way, sending up a cheer or two for the plucky girl, who, they thought, had challenged us single-handed to a run down the bay. We gained slowly but surely, and I must own to a flush of admiration as I saw that delicate girl doing the best with her feeble strength to steer the boat so as to give us all the advantage she could; but with her sail held in the position it was by the jammed rope, that was little enough. After five miles we could see the headland that terminated the bay, and the sight of it sent a cold chill through me, as I thought of the open water that lay this side of it, and beyond.

Rosslyn noticed my changed expression, and said, in a strained tone, 'That's the trouble; it is a question of time and distance—we can catch her, but I doubt if we have room to do it with this wind before we reach the break.'

"A number of boats flitted to and fro."
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He then commenced splicing odds and ends of rope together for a life-line, and I knew that it would be touch-and-go if the wind held. I looked around instinctively, but saw only the patchy clouds, which herald these squalls, stretching right down to the horizon, and my heart sank at the prospect of any help from that quarter. Behind us, a mile or more astern, streamed the long fleet of club boats; every one was alive to the danger now, and followed at all speed.

'What was the excessive danger?' a casual reader may ask.

Well, picture the bay with ice four to ten feet thick, according to the way the tides had packed it underneath, and then fancy the uneven edge with this floe broken into shifting anchor ice, rising and falling, churning and grinding, one block on another, as the league-long Atlantic rollers met the stiff wind; imagine, if possible, speeding at upwards of thirty miles an hour over the frozen surface, and into this seething cauldron; the sudden rush of icy water, and the crash of the mast and boom, and the inevitable collapse of the frail hull. *To sink under that anchor ice with an incoming tide, and at the edge of the vast field of ice was all but certain death!* Knowing this, as I did, you may conceive my feelings.

On! on! we rushed, and as we got nearer and nearer, we seemed to gain faster and faster. I could see the white, rigid face of the girl, her arms stretched almost to breaking, and, unaccountable though it may seem at such a time, I noticed where her jacket and dress had both split at the arms, and wondered why women should wear their clothes so tight.

So engrossed was I in observing her, and the slowly decreasing distance between us, that I lost sight of our close approach to the edge of the ice, until I heard Rosslyn say with a gasp, 'We shall never do it in this world.'

Then I looked ahead. There was the ever-varying line of the anchor ice, now showing black and broad as the waves curled and broke on the edge, now narrowing as they sank, and the back flowing waters drew back the splinters and smaller blocks of ice once more into the gap. It was only about six hundred yards away, and we had still ten or twelve yards to catch up.

I seized one end of the life-line, and throwing the loose end to Rosslyn, called to Ryan to take the tiller.

'Keep the line in hand, Bert, as I jump on board,' I said, 'we must take a round turn on something to bring them together while I get her off. She'll drop dead beaten as soon as her hands are off that tiller. Then as she gets on board, cut; and you, Ryan, ram the tiller down, and bring her round on that very instant, never mind me. We won't have a foot to spare any way.'

Nellie saw us running up closer and closer, and smiled a weak, sick sort of smile, but full of grit nevertheless.

'Now, Nell, let go the tiller, and step right to me,' I shouted, as we took the wind and ran alongside.

She made one step, and, as I expected, fell helpless right into my arms as I stepped on board and took a turn round the tiller post. Then I literally threw her on to our boat; I saw the knife flash on the rope, and the end curl back, and as my own boat swung round I leaped back and fell into Rosslyn's arms, both of us rolling into the cock-pit, narrowly missing Miss Fairfax, where she lay in a dead faint.

The boom swung round over our heads as we lay there, I heard a grinding crash, and a short, sharp crack of parting ice as our boat heeled right over, and with a heavy jarring lurch, and a rush of water into the cock-pit, we ran, close hauled, on the back stretch for home.

When I staggered to my feet, the yacht we had chased had disappeared, all that was left of her being some lumber rising and falling on the anchor ice, and the great sail lying flat on a huge block of ice. That is all I knew of it personally. Ryan said that she went to pieces in one smash, and that, as we swung round, and 'hung' for a second before we gathered away, the ice broke under our weight, and we jumped a three feet wide crack ere we reached the sound ice.

Miss Fairfax was very stiff for a few days, but otherwise none the worse for her perilous adventure, but I don't think she will ever forget that 'touch-and-go' in an ice-yacht.

A SPORTSMAN'S TOAST.

By H. S. Lockhart-Ross.

HERE'S to the hunter that carried me well
When the cry of the hounds was pealing
On the joys of the chase let memory dwell,
When age is our energy stealing.
Let the glass clink,
Merrily drink,
The hounds and the horses together we link.

Here's to the day I can never forget,
On the favourite fairly extended,
The winner remains in my stables yet,
Though his racing career is ended.
Fill to the brim,
Drink it to him,
Whose turf recollections no sorrow can dim.

Here's to the heathery moors of the north,
When the grouse are gallantly speeding,
Hey for the land lying north of the Forth!
No bonnier toast are we needing.
Success to the gun!
Drink till it's done,
The pleasures of shooting are second to none.

Here's to the salmon that gleams on his side,
When the rod in a bow is bending,
And the fisherman's heart is beating with pride
As he feels the struggle is ending.
Fill up your glass,
See on the grass
That silvery salmon, what fish can surpass?

Hurrah for the yacht that won me the cup
With her topsails airily flowing,
She was the cutter to show others up
When a gale was merrily blowing.
Drink to my ship,
Glass to your lip,
A livelier clipper ne'er slid from a slip.

A health to the sportsman of every grade,
It's a tie that nothing can sever,
May the lover of sport be prosperous made
In riches increasing for ever.
Lift your glass high,
'Sport' is our cry,
Confusion to him who the toast will deny.

A BAGFUL OF SPORTSMEN.

Assorted and Arranged in His Mind's Eye.

By FINCH MASON.

I DON'T know anywhere, except it is upon the racecourse, where one meets with a greater variety, a more mixed lot of one's fellow-men (and I might add women, than in the hunting-field. It is indeed a leveller, and most assuredly, as John Leech's inimitable little snob put it, is the means of 'bringing people together that would not otherwise meet.'

When once the fox is away, one man is just as good as another, and for the time being, if he has it in him, young Joe Hardman the farmer, on a four-year-old, bred by himself, and which he is riding to sell, is on equal terms with my Lord on his three-hundred guinea ready-made hunter.

'A bagful of sportsmen, eh? Well, let us give it a good shake, and turn it out. Here goes to begin! as the showman says. Out they tumble. Goodness! what a fine assortment of what town drapers call 'winter goods.'

Now for that great personage, the M. F. H. He is here somewhere, no doubt—the question is, which is he? No, sir,—you with the complexion of a prawn and the carroty whiskers, I mean—that complacent smirk won't make *me* believe for a moment that you are the man I am looking for; so don't try it on. You're capitally mounted, I must admit, and not badly got up on the whole; but you won't pass muster for an M. F. H. for all that. If I were betting on the event, I should say it was about 6 to 4 on your being a member of the St—k Exc—ge; your name (probably) is Tomkins, and are (also probably) known amongst your friends in Capel Court as the 'Pink 'Un,' that *sobriquet* having been

By your leave Genelmen!

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bestowed upon you by some city wit, in consequence of the florid tone of your hair and complexion. No, Tomkins, you're a very good fellow, very noisy, fond of hunting in a way, and fonder still of talking about it, and I wish I could say more of you, but I have not time just now, so, as facetious Lal Brough used to say in the burlesque of *Robinson Crusoe*, I must with all regret once more 'put you in the bag.'

'Ah! here's the very man I am in search of, I *think!*'

This white-whiskered, fresh-complexioned, somewhat peremptory looking gentleman, so admirably mounted on the weight-carrying chestnut; his general 'get up,' from the crown of his curly brimmed Lincoln & Bennett, to the tips of his highly varnished toes, the very 'acme' of perfection, can be none other than the M. F. H. A glance at him from the *near* side confirms me in that belief, for don't I see the tell-tale horncase fixed to his open flapped saddle?

There is a high-bred appearance about you, sir, on a closer inspection, that leads me to fancy somehow that you are a peer of the realm, and I fancy I can read your past career like a book. Eton, of course, where you were a distinguished 'dry bob,' and rowed in the ten-oar; you also were master of the college beagles, and consequently an admirable runner and jumper, though you never succeeded, in spite of many attempts, in clearing the 'school jump.' Christchurch to follow (where, of course, you kept the 'drag'), and the Blues after that. There you remained until the Earl, your father, died, when you very wisely sold out, married a wife, and devoted your energies for the future to breeding shorthorns, the duties of a country gentleman generally, and, above all, foxhunting. Genial as you look, and I am sure are, I fancy you can keep an unruly field in order on occasion. Now is a chance for you indeed, for at this identical moment, in my exuberant fancy, I hear a loud 'Tally ho!' It proceeds from the lungs of little 'Arry Spriggins (from town), who, stationed in a big ride of the wood the hounds are drawing, has just seen the fox cross in front of him, and is about to holloa again, when my lord appears upon the scene, and opens fire upon the offender at once.

'*Pray* don't exert that beautiful voice of yours any further, sir,' says he, in the politest manner possible; 'it would be a thousand pities to spoil it for the opera. That young man, too, you see over there (pointing to a whipper-in in the distance) is *paid* to do all the shouting required.'

Bravo! my lord, very neatly done; that quiet rebuke of yours was more effective than all the bad language in the world, I'll be bound.

Just as my lord has finished his lecture, a prolonged twang of the horn is heard, and away he goes at a gallop, crashing through the hazel stems, towards the end of the covert, the drop fence out of which he clears just in time to join his hounds, who are streaming out of it best pace. Bar accident that is his place throughout the run, and though apparently going at his ease all the time, so still does he sit in the saddle, he is really going at a very great pace. To see him come at water, first taking a pull at his horse, and then gradually quickening his pace until it almost amounts to a rush, as he approaches nearer, and yet always with his horse's hindquarters well under him, is a genuine exhibition of fine horsemanship, and nothing else.

Well, my lord, I must put you back in the bag. Long life and good sport go with you, and may the class of which you are an ornament never have a worse representative than yourself.

Here are three figures all together, their velvet caps and tightly buttoned coats, tell us pretty plainly who they are and what part in the play they perform. That ruddy, clean-shaven 'varmint' face, with its pair of keen grey eyes, belonging to the senior of the two, that look as if they were capable of viewing a fox a hundred miles off, could belong to nobody but a huntsman. How well I fancy I can hear his cheery voice encouraging his beauties as they plunge into the thick gorse.

'Eleu, in there! Bonnybell, good bitch,' says he, rising in his stirrups, and Bonnybell, pausing for a second in her investigations, looks up into his face with a wave of her stern and a pleased expression in her intelligent eyes, as if she fully appreciated the endearment, which no doubt she does in fact. How well I can picture him to myself, all through the run, from the very commencement when he gives those three twangs of his horn, on leaving cover, that in the ears of some sound pleasanter than the finest music in the world, to the final scene of all, when his *Who-hoop!* shrieked out as it is, in the highest notes he possesses, is calculated to startle every bird and beast in the neighbourhood, and certainly to strike terror into the heart of any fox within hearing! How plainly I can see him, as getting a view of the hunted fox, he, cap in hand, cheers the hounds on! If the arch trespasser, all bedraggled as he is, and all but told out, could only look back and behold the look of triumph that at this juncture lights up the face of his relentless pursuer—much the same sort of expression that probably came over the features of the Iron Duke when, at the close of Waterloo, he put up his glass with a snap, and with the exclamation, 'The day is mine!' ordered the whole line to advance—his stout heart would indeed sink within him, and he might well be excused for giving up the day as lost. The other two wearers of the velvet caps are the whippers-in. There is a sedateness about the elder of the twain that denotes the old hand at the game, and Tom, the first whip, doubtless will before long blossom out into a full-blown huntsman. The younger of the pair, a mere boy, has not yet come to look at foxhunting from a serious point of view, on the contrary he treats the whole business as one prodigious lark. Lord, how that boy does enjoy the galloping and jumping part of the play! A schoolboy out for a holiday is tameness itself in comparison. Watch him galloping along yon narrow ride, crowded with horsemen; as there is not room to get by without what Mrs. Gamp, of immortal memory, would term 'scrooging,' our youthful whipper-in springs up into the saddle in a kneeling position, with all the agility of a circus rider, and back again into his seat before you can say 'knife.' Ah, well, he'll sober down a bit, after another season or two no doubt. He will probably adopt, too, a quieter style of riding after he has experienced a heavy fall or two. At present, there is no doubt about it, he is a trifle rash.

For instance, there was not the slightest occasion for the young 'varmint' the other day to jump the rails on each side of the railway (the Great Smashem and Crumplemup) just where it runs through Berry Grove on the level. Hounds were not running and there was a gate not a hundred yards off. But my lord was not out that day and the huntsman was not in sight, (of both of which facts you were perfectly well aware, sir), and you could not resist the opportunity of showing off a bit before a knot of sportsmen collected the other side. It would have served you very well right had you come to immortal grief, you young reprobate; as it is, I am bound to record the fact that you and your horse topped the rails (the train in sight, too) in most workmanlike fashion.

As indeed they did. 'Coom up, 'oss!' says young Bill, sitting well back in that loose, *dégagé* fashion so affected by whippers-in. And over they go, apparently without an effort, across the line at a trot, and over the second flight of rails in similar fashion.

This very spic-and-span young gentleman, with a cigar of the largest dimensions in his mouth, got up to the 'nines' and admirably mounted, can be none other than a very fine specimen of the sporting undergraduate of the period. The eldest son, I should not wonder, of Mr. Verdant Green's friend, Mr. 'Four-in-hand' Fosbrooke. In fact, I feel very inclined to ask him on the spot after some of the governor's old friends. Little Mr. Bouncer must, we feel sure, be getting very stout by now, and probably a trifle gouty, though, thanks to his cheerful temperament, still going strong. The Reverend Charles Larkins, too, must also be by this time of a portly presence and the very model of a country rector. And dear old Verdant himself, I wonder how *he* is? Still the same amiable old muff, I'll be bound.

Yes, as I watch (still in my mind's eye) my young friend of the gorgeous get-up go out of his way, as they are going from cover to cover, to jump a large white gate, thereby scattering a select covey of elderly sportsmen, one of whom, old Mr. Booby of Booby Hall, was at that moment fumbling at the latch with his hunting whip, I feel surer now than ever that he is a shining light of the ''Varsity,' probably 'sent down' for some escapade, and now doing penance in the bosom of his family in consequence. We feel sure that he is a distinguished member of the drag of whichever university he affects, and has probably donned cap and jacket at Aylesbury or Cottenham before now, not to mention numerous performances at various times in college grounds and such like.

The Drag is a rare school for horsemen, as must be admitted. As the late Major Whyte Melville remarked in *Market Harboro'* (the very best hunting book in my opinion that ever was written): 'It is scarcely possible to imagine an education more calculated to make a *horseman*, and spoil a *sportsman*, than the Oxford drag.' Which of the two great universities this particular swell I have just fished out of my bag honours with his presence I know not; but if at Cambridge, we can imagine what a regular attendant he would be at Newmarket on race days. How he would head the 'Varsity contingent, smoking a bigger cigar and wearing a shooting jacket of a louder pattern than anyone. What a quantity of champagne he would consume at the 'Rutland Arms' or the 'White Hart' before going on the course, and when there, what a thorn he would prove in the side of the timid pedestrian—to say nothing of the equestrian—from his habit of galloping about at top speed all over the place. Woe betide any one who gets in his way, for your sporting undergraduate, as a rule, knows no distinction of person, and when on Newmarket Heath would just as soon ride over a peer as a commoner.

A lady this time; young, pretty, attired in a brown habit of irreproachable cut and fit, with hat to match, and mounted on a well-bred, short-legged chestnut horse, that looks like going all over. She is accompanied by an elderly gentleman whom I should take to be her papa, and who does *not* look much like going, and she is in earnest conversation with a young fellow in scarlet, of military appearance, who *does*. I can foresee with half an eye what will happen. Papa will be busy discussing the affairs of the nation—probably the all-engrossing Irish question—in one of the rides of Oakapple Wood, which the hounds are drawing, when suddenly the sound of a distant holloa makes sportsmen one and all prick up their ears. It is a find!

'Violet, my love—why, where's my daughter?' exclaims the Squire, suddenly missing her. 'She was here not two minutes ago. Bother the girl!' goes on the testy old gentleman, 'where *can* she have got to?' and away gallops papa with the rest, and reaches the outside of the wood just in time to catch a sight of the hounds three fields away, running as hard as ever they can go with only seven or eight people with them, besides the huntsman; amongst which select company he can plainly make out his brown-habited daughter, taking fence for fence in most matter-of-fact style with the military-looking sportsman previously mentioned. And the military sportsman not being endowed with a superabundance of worldly goods, the Squire is not altogether so pleased as he might be at the circumstance. Papa, now exceedingly red in the face and very irritable, rides the line gallantly through a succession of gaps and gates for some time, until at last he is brought up in common with a lot more of the heavy brigade, at a fence of formidable dimensions, in which, alas, there is no gap, and the only gate out of the field being padlocked, he and his friends are effectually 'pounded,' or as they prefer to call it 'thrown out,' and in consequence don't set eyes on the hounds again during the day. There is clearly nothing to be done but to light a cigar apiece and go home. Just at dusk 'my daughter' turns up accompanied by her military admirer, herself covered with mud, and with her horse done to a turn. Of course she greets the Squire the moment she gets in (the sly puss) with 'Oh! papa, dear, where *did* you get to? I looked for you *everywhere.* We've had *such* a run—the fastest thing they've had all the season—and Goldfinch carried me like a bird, and I got the brush, and I've asked Captain Famish in to have a glass of sherry.' And as the Squire doats on his daughter, and cannot be angry with her even if he tried, he gives the fair truant a kiss and rings for the sherry.

By-and-by Miss Violet trips out of the room to change her habit, and no sooner has she done so than Captain Famish, on the principle probably that 'open confession is good for the soul,' promptly proceeds to attack the Squire on the subject of his daughter. It was the old story, the gallant *sabreur* had lost his heart long ago to his fair enchantress, and up till now he had managed to keep his feelings to himself, but the long ride home in the dusk *tête-à-tête* with his charmer had so completely settled his hash for him that he could no longer hide his sentiments. 'It would not have happened if I had been there,' thought the Squire to himself. However, no doubt the worthy old gentleman resigns himself to the inevitable, with the consolation that if the lovers had not plighted their troth that particular day they would have done so on another. And what are the odds as long as every one is happy?

A pepper-and-salt-coated sportsman now appears upon the scene—a tall, wiry-looking man of middle age, with bushy whiskers, and rather good features to his ruddy face; the drab cord breeches meet the brownest pair of tops we ever saw, and he bestrides a rather washed out chestnut thoroughbred, fired all round, whose plain snaffle bridle with martingale attached, gives him rather a 'steeplechasey' appearance, whilst a mackintosh strapped in front of the saddle shows that his rider likes to take every precaution against bad weather. There is a workmanlike appearance about both horse and man that gives me an idea that they would be a pair extremely likely to be there or thereabouts in a good thing with my lord's hounds. The wearer of the brown tops can be nothing else than a tenant

Boys will be Boys!

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farmer, I feel sure, and probably on a large scale too, and I would almost wager anything that he and a silken jacket are not strangers to each other, when the local hunt steeplechase meeting comes round. He is just the man, in fact, I can imagine winning the Farmer's Cup on his own horse nearly every year, and being received with uproarious applause by the natives on his return to 'weigh in.' The yokels on these festive occasions nearly always have one particular horse and man whom they swear by, and back accordingly.

Who have we here? A youthful sportsman bestriding a clean-looking, light-weight hunter, with a square-cut tail and hogged mane, and wearing over his grey shooting jacket a white Byron collar, by which token I gather that he is at this period of his career receiving a liberal education at that celebrated establishment which Henry the Seventh was good enough to found,—Eton, to wit. Though boyish about the neck, he is decidedly manly about his legs, for he sports brown cord breeches, and patent leather butcher boots, which latter, judging from the admiring way he looks at them from time to time *en profile*, he is evidently extremely proud of. Those boots I feel sure have been in the bootmaker's window at Eton all the previous half, and their sporting owner I feel equally certain has never been able to resist going to admire them every time he wended his way 'up town.' How he must have badgered poor deaf Tom Brown the tailor too, about those cord breeches during the past half. He is only waiting until that halcyon period when he will 'go into tails,' as he calls it, to look upon brown cords and butcher boots with scorn and contumely, and mount leathers and tops in their stead. In all probability he will start a bit of pink at the same time if the governor don't object (which he probably will). Needless to say that when everybody is dawdling about in the big wood which the hounds are drawing, my young friend may be seen sucking vigorously at one of Mrs. Kitty Frazer's cigars, a case full of which he has about him, which *won't* draw at any price, apparently, and I fancy makes him feel rather so-so; though he won't own to it, of course. He will be exceedingly glad when they find, for in that case it is the correct thing to do to throw away one's weed, no matter how good a one. For does not that old hunting song that he is always quoting, talk about,

> 'Cigars thrown away in a hurry,
> And bridle reins gathered up tight."

At last a welcome chorus of hounds comes to our young friend's relief, not a bit too soon either, for the unhappy youth is rapidly turning white about the gills. Away goes the cigar, and away he goes best pace. Scorning the crowded gateway, he follows the second whip over a big drop fence out of the wood; thereby getting an extremely good place, which, with the advantage he possesses of a light weight and a good horse, it will be his own fault if he don't keep.

'*Floreat Etona!*' say we.

CRICKET IN AMERICA.

By 'CHAMELEON.'

I heard them speak of cricket with delight;
I read reports of matches past and gone,
Where lengthy scores proclaimed the batsman's might,
Pitted against eleven others—one.

I mused and pondered o'er the mystic game,
Comparing it with baseball's changeful scores,
Confused, and restless—when with loud acclaim
An alien team was landed on our shores.

At last the chance was mine to see them play—
To solve the question that perplexed me sore
Of how the interest ran from day to day,
And why the batsmen piled up such a score.

I sought the cricket grounds at dawn of day,
The solemn cricketers, to fate resigned,
With gloomy brows began their doleful play,
And bowled or batted with dejected mind.

I watched the batsman with a flat, broad bat,
Swipe slowly at a ball that crept along;
And mused to see a fielder, short and fat,
Pursue the ball, with snatches of old song.

High up the hills of heaven climbed the sun,
And on the downward slope his course began;
The batsman scored his thirteenth hundred run,
And every now and then again he ran.

So now they put a 'demon bowler' on;
His arms he flings, like threshing flails, around,
He views the ball with sorrow, and anon
Hurls it abroad or casts it on the ground.

Now deeper silence falls upon the scene,
The batsman, physically worn out, falls,
While darkness veils the drear and dismal scene,
As the hearse driver for the players calls.

Yet still I long to know what game was made,
That I may know the best, or rather worst,
The mourning umpire tells me they have played
'*The first half of the first half of the first.*'

TWO MILES OVER HURDLES.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'

WHILE steeplechasing was the natural outcome of hunting, hurdle-racing, there is some reason to believe, was founded by some man interested in the bone-setting profession. At any rate we well know that hundreds of men have been carried home on one of the sister hurdles to that on which they have come to grief, and the use of splints subsequently, makes one believe that the pastime is as much 'in timber' as 'over timber.' If one were allowed to take the barriers in the same style as they do the ordinary sheep wattles or flakes when slow hunting or at an ordinary hunting pace, there would be no great danger, but as a rule the hurdle racehorse is one which must gallop through, over, or under, at a pace which is as fast as across the flat. It has been fortunate for many that the hurdles used have invariably been of slim construction, and little better than imaginary fences, which might delude sheep into the belief that they were hemmed in, or horses with an attempt to rise and clear them, but which would be knocked down by one butt from a dashing ox, for sake of the bite of clover which he might see beyond. It was to one of these meetings where a hurdle-race forms the customary wind up, that our heroes were travelling on the Great Northern line, and the conversation turned on 'the timber' question, and its absurdities.

'Butler tells me, Vinkins, that he means to win the hurdle-race with your old cast-off, Top Sawyer.'

'Top Sawyer win a hurdle race! Bah! I tried to get him to take to timber, but he would not rise an inch. Top Sawyer! well! I'll have a bit against him if he starts.'

'Don't be in a hurry. Butler knows what he's about, and I know he means to win.'

'He does! then depend upon it there's some roguery. Top Sawyer could no more win a hurdle race than Billy Butler could be honest, and I know them both—the one I *trained*, the other *trained* me.'

'Oh, yes, I forgot you were in partnership once with Butler.'

'Once! Yes, I *was*, in name only. I had the whole of the expenses and he found the whole of the profit. However, experience is worth something, especially the experience of a double-dyed villain like William Butler, Esquire, Gentleman Rider, but gentleman nothing else. Does he say he'll win the hurdle race with Top Sawyer—does he?'

'He's taken 100*l.* to 10*l.* about him with me, and I wouldn't have laid it except what you said about the horse when you let him go after that Selling Race. If I had thought he would jump, I'd have given two fifty for him.'

'*I'd* have bought him in at three hundred if he could, and that's only six weeks ago; never mind, don't tell Butler anything about our conversation, and lay Top Sawyer as much as you like. I'll find out the game. I know Bill Butler. But you're sure about the bet?'

'He made me initial it next morning.'

'He did! well, *gentlemen* as a rule don't need to do these things if they do them with their heads clear, but he means business. Never mind, take my advice. Over two miles on the flat Top Sawyer would win in a walk; over hurdles, bah! But here, we are at Kerrydon; which hotel are you stopping at?'

'The King's Head.'

'Then so will Butler be. I'm going to the Queen's. You'll see him in the billiard-room, and if he's made this job right he'll repeat his bets. Take him, will you, once or twice for *me?* but of course, don't mention my name. I'm quite good enough, I daresay, you know.'

'It's all right,' was the reply, 'how much shall I take him to?

'Take him to a thousand—I'll stop his game; and by heaven

I'll pay back a debt I've owed him for many a day, and will owe him to the end of my lifetime, the infernal scoundrel! Good-bye, don't lose your head over the brandy and soda; be a little soberer than you look, and he's sure to be at you. I know Billy, well. He's a consummate scoundrel, and—and a—well, a gentleman rider.'

Kerrydon, a little country town which boasted of an antiquated cathedral, a less antiquated hotel, and a ruined reputation for religion, having been set down as a den of wickedness the moment a race-meeting was started, was, as the reporters said, *en fête*. *En fête* meant, possibly, the fact that about half a thousand of the dirtiest ruffians in the world had taken up their quarters for the night in it, that there was to be a race ball, and that the *elite* (could a racing reporter do his work without this grand word?) of the country were to be present. The King's Head was, as usual on ante-race nights, crowded, and the guinea for a bed exacted from everyone, with the privilege to others less fortunate of a shakedown on the billiard-table when shilling pool had been suspended. Mr. Charles Hounslow, familiarly known as 'Charlie of the Heath,' had been lucky enough to secure a room, but not one so well situated as he would like, it being the boot's, and situated just alongside the smoking-room. Still it was better than having to lie with the crowd, each one of which was quite equal to the work of throat cutting or pocket picking; so he deposited his portmanteau, locked the door, and joined the throng who were round the bar. Butler was, he found, a conspicuous man in the centre, and was busily engaged with the barmaid in a flirtation, he being most 'handsomely ugly' as the Yankees say, and therfore quite a lady-killer in his own opinion. The young lady was to have a full box of gloves if Top Sawyer won, and the number of her hand was taken, for Butler had said that it was bound to come off.

'So you think your horse will win, Mr. Butler?' said Charlie of the Heath.

'He'll win in a walk,' was the confident reply, 'though, of course, I don't want everybody to know.'

'Well, I'll lay you five hundred to one, and you stand me a B. and S. old boy, for luck,' hiccuped the other, with a well-imitated drunkard's leer and stagger.

'Done! it's a bet!' was the not unexpected reply. 'Two brandies please, and a soda split,' was the order. 'I'll stand you that drink with the greatest pleasure in the world. Top Sawyer, my dear sir, will walk in; I'll ride him myself.'

'Can he jump!' asked the other.

'He'll jump all that I ask him to, and what he won't jump he'll knock down.'

'Risky work don't you call that, eh?'

'Well, some people put a precious sight too much value on their necks, and call hurdle racing murder, but I must say it's just as good a game as steeplechasing. You've got to risk your neck as much in the one as the other.'

'Well, as a rule, maybe; but you must confess there is a difference between riding a horse well schooled to the jumping business, and dashing an old Selling Plater at a flight of hurdles.'

'Not a bit; never flinch, and the timber will soon fly; it's the craners that come to grief. Gallop at them as if they were shadows, fly them or strike them, and you're pretty safe. You watch how I'll ride to-morrow.'

Next morning, while strolling about in front of the hotel, in that nervous condition peculiar to racing men between the breakfast bell and the saddling bell, Mr. Charles Hounslow was accosted by his fellow railway-passenger of the previous day. He was looking as fresh as the new-plucked rose which he carried in his button-hole, though he had to confess he had scarcely touched the sheets, having sat up most of the night at cards.

'Well, did you see Butler, eh?' was his eager inquiry.

'I did, and laid him five hundred to one hundred against his horse, which I suppose you want transferred to your book.'

'The odds are stiffish, but they're not so stiff as the horse.'

'Why, he'll ride him himself, he says.'

'Yes, I know he will; but never mind, two can play at his games, and I'll go Napoleon on my card. Wait till you see the end.'

The first race was set down on the card for two o'clock, a miserable little farmer's affair, with three half-breds, ridden by stout, strong yokels, who held the reins like plough handles, and handled their whips like pitchforks. A Selling Stakes came next, then 'the Coop,' as great a Coop as that of Ascot or Goodwood in the opinion of the natives. A Two-year-old Race and a Welter followed, and then there came the ever-exciting hurdle race, so dear to all those who like to see accidents, and consider it no sport at all if there is not a single horse or man down, and not a bone broken. First to weigh out was Butler, and as soon as the number of Top Sawyer was shown, the betting Babel commenced. Butler did not seem very much afraid of the result, for as he flitted out and in through the crowd, whip in hand, and all ready to mount, he wrote down several big bets which were shouted. Soon, therefore, Top Sawyer was made a favourite, yet Mr. Vinkins, in the corner of the stand, was not, seemingly, afraid to lay against it.

'You seem to know something about this race,' said Charlie of the Heath, approaching him ; what is it?'

'Wait, my lad,' was the reply, 'and in the meantime back Whirlwind, for that's the one that will win this race.'

'If Top Sawyer keeps his legs people say he can't lose.'

'The only legs he'll keep are black legs, like the man on his back. There, I've told you—more you won't get from me. Mr. Billy Butler broke me once financially, and almost broke my neck as well in a race I rode with him afterwards. Maybe his turn's coming, but I'll never forget his wild, wicked eye, when he rode at me over the rails at Punterville, nor my feelings in regard to him when I lay in a miserable little country hospital for five weeks afterwards with a broken leg. Never have had a broken leg I suppose, so you don't understand it? By heaven's! the recollection of that little country place, with its teetotal old doctor, and its old-fashioned nurses, gives me the blues when I think of it yet.'

'I think I know your game now,' said Charlie of the Heath, 'it's a risky game to play. You should have waited till you got in the saddle yourself.'

'Well, that won't be again, but you don't see what I'm after yet. However, what's that? three to one Whirlwind? Here you are, three ponies. Twice if you like,' and away went the speaker into the crowd again.

Ten minutes afterwards the whole of the six competitors had cantered past and took up their positions at the starting-post. No sooner was the flag prominently raised than it was dipped, and Top Sawyer next the rails took a clear lead of everything, much to the surprise of some who were under the impression that a certain starter was to have made all the running and all the timber-smashing for him. The latter part of the work, it was soon made evident, he was quite equal to do for himself, for the two top bars of the first flight of hurdles he came to, he literally carried for a couple of strides between his knees and his neck. Passing the Stand he was four clear lengths in front, and going like a clipper ship with the wind on the quarter.

'A hundred to fifty on Top Sawyer!' shouted Butler's right-hand man, and boon companion.

'I'll have it,' came from the Stand just as quickly.

Hounslow looked up, and saw that it was Vinkins, who jotted it down quietly in his book, looked up, and said, 'Again?'

The Butlerite was apparently awed by his cool and resolute manner, and answered merely by shutting his betting-book and taking a look through his glasses at the race.

All got over the second flight well enough, Whirlwind jumping like a cat, and Top Sawyer boring through them like a bull, and in a style which must have been very uncomfortable to his rider. Going up to the third flight the pace was doubled, the favourite still leading, and making it quite evident that he had only to keep his legs to win. Three more flights from home he was pulling double, and murmurs were heard such as 'Top Sawyer wins!' 'The favourite wins in a walk!' 'Oh, Butler, it's no race at all!' The turf reporters for the evening papers had written the name down opposite the already-written word first in their telegraph result forms, the bookmakers made ready their change to pay, and it being the last race, many of the backers jumped down from the Stand. Hounslow was mad with himself, for he felt certain that Vinkins had sold him, and that, to put it mildly, he had been done out of his money by a confederate of Butler's, who had pretended to be Butler's enemy.

'Top Sawyer wins!' a hundred to thirty on Top Sawyer!' shouted a man with a stentorian voice.

'Here, I'll have it!' was the quick reply.

Hounslow looked; again it was Vinkins, looking as cool and collected as ever.

Scarcely had he noted it in his book, than a yell came from the crowd on the Stand, and the cry, 'Top Sawyer's down!' 'By heaven's! didn't he come a cropper!' 'Butler's killed!' followed by the remarks, 'I told you so, you can never depend on them if they don't jump well.' In a few moments, 'Whirlwind wins!' 'Whirlwind walks in!' 'Whirlwind wins for a monkey!' and Whirlwind did win, in the commonest of canters.

Scarcely had the crowd vanished from the paddock in a homeward direction than, stretched on a hurdle, poor Butler arrived in a dazed and bruised condition, and as the surgeon on the spot found, with his right leg broken under the knee, Top Sawyer having fared worse, and broken his neck. Everybody had a word of sympathy for him, but his old partner, who, as he lit a big cigar, seemed to gloat with a feeling of womanly revenge at the position of the gentleman rider.

'You had some cursed hand in this, Vinkins,' hissed the latter through his teeth.

'Maybe I had, Billy Butler; you gave me a lesson in shuffling a pack of cards once, and I've paid you back. I've shown you how to *shuffle a flight of hurdles.* The broken leg you owed me since that day at Baldoyle.'

'By heaven's! Vinkins, when I get better I'll shoot you, I will!'

'No you'll not, and if you send me your cheque for that two hundred this gentleman took for me at the King's Head bar, I'll let it stop there; if not, the Stewards will know all, even should they trip me up. If you can look beneath you'll find you've got the hurdle strong and sound you meant to break to pieces.'

They parted there and then, but on the way home Hounslow asked Vinkins to give him an explanation of the whole affair.

'Oh,' said the latter; 'it's an old game of Butler's. He got the old fellow to plant the hurdles with one as weak as wicker-work in the inside. Having schooled the horse to run at such weak fences, through them or over, he determined to jump off with a good lead, and of course kept it till the last flight, where I had put in two which would have brought down a sixteen-stone hunter—all for a five pound note, too. I know it's what you call too sharp work for you. You wouldn't like it, but if you had lost a fortune through greenness like me, you would not stick at much in effecting your purpose.'

After that Charlie Hounslow never waited to see the last event on a race programme if it was marked 'Two Miles over Hurdles.'

A MIXED BAG AND A ROUGH NIGHT.

By R. M. ALEXANDER.

NOTHING pleases the keen shooter more than a good mixed bag over rough ground. The uncertainty of what is going to get up next adds immensely to the excitement. How much more pleasurable it is to hear the varied cries of 'mark snipe!' 'hare forward!' 'duck over!' 'rabbit back!' and the low, drawled-out 'ma-ark!' as a large covey of partridges rises just out of range, but are seen pitching into a heavy crop of roots some three fields ahead, and well within the boundary, than to be posted forward outside a home covert on a cold day with nothing but tame pheasants, so stuffed with Indian corn that they can hardly fly, rising within easy range, and (as frequently happens nowadays) a very small sprinkling of hares. Of course, with the beaters the sport is more varied, as the sportive bunny keeps one alive, and also more chance of 'cock' if they are in; but it comes nowhere within reach of the mixed bags obtained in Scotland at the back end of the season.

Some years ago I was staying in the month of November with a friend of mine at his shooting lodge. One night after dinner he sent for old Sandy Stewart, the head keeper, to give orders for our next day's sport.

'Going to be fine to-morrow?' my friend Percy asked, as old Sandy stood at the door twisting his bonnet like a washerwoman wringing out a wet cloth.

'I'm no verra shure aboot it, Sir; there's a gusty wind frae the nor'-east, and it's as black as pitch.'

'Anyhow, we must take our chance,' was the decided reply. 'I wish to go in for a mixed bag to-morrow, and want to know what you would suggest, Sandy,'

'We can manage that fine, Sir,' he said. 'We can tak' a turn through this pairt o' the moor on oor way tae McGlashen's stooks, whaur we'll get a chance o' a black cock; sine we'll beat Peter McPhairshun's neeps for paytricks; then doon the muckle burn, whaur I ken there's deucks; sine on through Bracksie Moss, whaur, if ye haud straight, ye should kill fifteen or twenty couple o' snipes; and if we've time we meight get a pheasant or twa in Cotton Wood.'

'Capital!' I exclaimed. 'That's the sort of sport for me!'

'Ye'll hae tae start early,' said Sandy, 'if ye want tae get on tae the black game.'

So we arranged to be on the move by 7 a.m. The morning turned out dull and threatening; but, nothing daunted, we started, taking only a brace of steady setters and two retrievers.

On our way through the moor we picked up three and a half brace of grouse, and soon Sandy exclaimed, 'If ye want tae get the black game on the stooks, gentlemen, ye'd better no shoot any mair, as we'll hae tae stalk them if they're feedin'.'

We took his advice, and crossed the next hill without firing a shot. Our first glimpse of the stooks showed us over a hundred black game on the stubble, and several stooks completely black with them.

Sandy and the two other keepers then lay down in a hollow with the dogs, whilst Percy and I started on our hands and knees to reach the dyke that separated the moor from the field. Having crawled for some three hundred yards, I carefully raised my head, and, finding we were just opposite the birds, signalled to Percy. I singled out a closely packed stook, and blazed into it, giving them the second barrel as they rose. Percy did likewise. We then climbed over the dyke to gather our fallen victims, which numbered nine, and one of the keepers having marked another fall dead about half a mile off, went to get it with one of the retrievers. Not a bad bag for four barrels. Poaching! some will say, but it is the only way to get black game at that season of the year, unless you have plenty of guns and drive them. Besides, the farmers bless you, as these birds destroy a quantity of grain. I am not ashamed to own that I would resort to any means to kill a black cock at the back end, as they are then as cunning as they are stupid at the commencement of the season.

'Can we manage McGlashen's turnips before lunch, Sandy,' asked Percy.

'Fine that, Sir,' he replied. 'I've sent Angus with three boys tae walk the stubbles, so ye've naethin' tae dae but shoot.'

Which we did, and bagged thirteen brace before we sat down in McGlashen's comfortable little farm parlour, redolent of peat, and ornamented with the orthodox spotted dogs on the mantelpiece, with a large black tray in the middle painted with impossible roses and fuschias, and a clock that you could hear tick a mile off. On the walls hung a six-year-old almanac, with a gaudy border and an advertisement of a local grocer at the bottom, a photo of McGlashen sitting down staring straight at you, a hand on each knee, and his 'missus,' of course, standing up, with a huge fist hanging over his shoulder—correct style! On a corner table lay an enormous family Bible, and a snuff-box into which you could pack a suit of clothes.

An ancient collie dog with bristling hairs, an unpleasant face, and rigid tail, sniffs about our legs in an uncomfortable manner, but a kick in the ribs from McGlashen's iron-tipped toe sends him snarling out of the doors to wreak his vengeance on one of the retrievers outside; but here he gets more than he bargained for, and finally retires into the obscurity which he is best fitted to adorn.

Having satisfied the inner man, and drunk fortune to the farmer, we asked him if he had seen any ducks about.

'I was doon by the pen this mornin',' he replied, 'and heerd them 'quawking' in the muckle burn, so ablens (perhaps) ye'll get some or ablens ye'll no.' What a safe man is the canny Scot! beats Griffiths into fits.

Down the burn we then started, Percy and I some distance ahead of the keepers, on our way to a part of the stream which opened out into a sort of pond, lined on each side with rushes and willow bushes, which was generally a sure find for ducks.

At Percy's suggestion I made a *détour* and got behind a bank a little below the pool, and took up my position for the chance of a driving shot while he came down on the birds, if any there were; and, putting a couple of cartridges on the bank in front of me, waited for a few moments, when two reports, rapidly following each other, and a loud quacking and splashing, put me on the *qui vive.* I presently saw two mallards and three ducks making straight for my position, when one of the ducks, which I thought was going rather sick, pitched into the water just in front of me. I took no notice of her, but brought down the leading mallard and a duck behind him. Shoving in the other two cartridges, I killed the wounded duck as it came up after a long dive about thirty yards from me. Percy then appeared with the keepers, one of them carrying another mallard killed by him.

A little distance down the burn we flushed a couple of teal and got them both.

Getting on with our mixed bag!

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'I think we should get some sport on Bracksie Moss,' said Percy; 'but we must take a turn through these grass fields first for a hare or two.'

We now spread out into line, and soon one of the boys, who had been walking the stubbles with Angus, touched me on the arm, and, pointing with his stick to a tuft of grass in front of me, said excitedly, 'There's a hare sittin' there, Sir; tak' her whaur she is!' He either thought me incapable of knocking it over when on the move or else his father was a poacher. Much to my disgust I *did* miss that hare with both barrels when it bolted from its form. 'Man, what a peity,' quoth the disappointed youth. However, he thought better of me when I killed three or four well on the move directly afterwards.

In the middle of the next field was a knoll covered with brushwood, and a likely place for partridges, so we determined to walk through it. On nearing the top a hare broke in front of me. I fired, and rolled it over, when Sandy, who was on my left, quietly remarked, 'Ye made a bonny shot that time, Sir.'

'Nothing particular about it, Sandy,' I answered. 'Not a very difficult one.'

'Come forrit a wee, and see what ye've done, Sir.'

At a loss to make out what he meant, I went forward with him, when he pointed to a sheep lying on its back quivering.

'That was the bonny shot, Sir,' he remarked with a smile.

'I don't believe it, Sandy. I never saw the beast when I fired.'

'But I saw it fa', Sir, when ye did fire.'

There was no getting out of it. A patch of broom was between me and the sheep which hid it from my view, and I had killed it and the hare at one shot.

Percy coming up to see what the matter was, on grasping the situation, sarcastically remarked, 'Getting on with our mixed bag, old boy.'

'None of your chaff,' I replied, looking round and catching the horrid boys nudging each other with their elbows and grinning from ear to ear. I felt inclined to smash their three heads together. It might have happened to anybody.

The poor old ewe was bled by one of the keepers, and left where it was for the present. We afterwards sent a message to the farmer who owned it, telling him to sell it to a butcher, and I would pay any loss. I was eventually told that the butcher would give nothing for it, as it was a 'teuch auld yow, and a useless brute.' So the quarters were given to the keepers, and the rest to the dogs. I had to pay thirty-seven and sixpence, and in future took good care to look before I shot.

Having recovered my equanimity, we made tracks for Bracksie Moss, and soon got on terms with the snipe. We found the place full of them.

Merrily we keep on flushing
Whisp after whisp,
While the dogs are boldly rushing
Through the reeds that are stiff and crisp.

Down the birds keep falling
To shot after shot,
And the keepers cheerily calling
To the dogs with the birds they'd got.

I had been warned by Sandy to keep a sharp look-out for drains that ran through the Moss, remarking, 'that if ye get into one, Sir, maybe ye'll never be seen again.'

However, in the excitement of the moment I disregarded his warning, when suddenly in I went clean up to my shoulders, but had the sense to spread out my arms, and so prevented myself sinking further, and yelled out for help. Sandy came to my rescue, and held out his stick, which was fortunately a long one with a crook at the end, on to which I hung like grim death. He put his whole weight on to it, but couldn't budge me. The two other keepers then came to his assistance, and one grasping him round the waist, and the other doing likewise to the second, after a desperate struggle, which nearly pulled my arms out of their sockets, I was landed on *terra firma*. It was a tug of war, which, fortunately, went against me, or I should not have penned this story. As may be imagined, I presented a sorry spectacle, being covered with a thick coating of mud, peat, and slime.

The long-threatened storm now looked as if it meant to begin business, a bitterly cold wind was blowing, and heavy clouds were rolling up one after the other. Percy suggested that we should make the best of our way to Whiteford village, where we had ordered the groom to meet us with the dog-cart.

'We have had enough adventures for one day—at least, *I* have,' I remarked, as we wended our way towards the village, little knowing that worse still was to come.

The storm now burst upon us in all its fury, and by the time we reached the inn every one was soaked through. I was the only one who scored, as the heavy rain pretty well cleaned me up.

Finding our trap had not arrived, we went into the parlour, and ordered hot grogs all round, and hung our coats on the backs of chairs in front of the fire to dry. At the expiration of over an hour we heard the rattle of wheels outside, and, the landlord announcing the arrival of our trap, we got our things together and had them put on board.

Being stiff and chilled we both determined to walk up to the top of a very steep hill that led out of the village on our way home, and the groom was instructed to drive on and wait for us.

'Heavens! what a night!' exclaimed Percy, jumping on one side as a chimney-pot came crashing to the ground within a few feet of us.

After that we kept as near the middle of the road as we could so as to escape the slates and chimney-pots that were rattling down in all directions. We got clear of the village, and breasted the hill in the face of as terrible a storm as any mortal ever experienced in Scotland. Shivering and nearly drowned by the cruel, driving sleet, we at last reached the top, and looked anxiously for the trap, but it was nowhere to be seen.

'What on earth has happened,' gasped Percy; 'surely that idiot didn't misunderstand me and has driven home. I know he sometimes takes a little more than is good for him.'

'Now that you mention it,' I answered, 'I think he was a little bit on, as he was certainly swaying about on his seat; but I thought it was the wind, which is enough to unsteady anybody.'

We hallooed at the top of our voices, and then listened anxiously for any sound of wheels, but nothing could be heard but the terrible roar of the storm, which seemed if possible to be increasing.

'Perhaps he is waiting at the top of the next hill,' I shouted in Percy's ear; so we again struggled on arm in arm in order to put more weight against the wind, as it was impossible to make headway singly against it.

After combating the elements for at least an hour we reached the top of the next hill, with like result.

'There's nothing for it now but push on, if possible,' said Percy; 'we are half way, and there is no use turning back.'

'I don't think I can go much further,' I answered; 'I'm about done.'

We were then nearly three miles from the lodge. A long pull at our flasks, which we had luckily replenished at the inn, revived us a little, although horrid visions of fever and ague, rheumatism, &c., came across me as we stood shivering and hopeless. After another desperate struggle for about a quarter of a mile I sank down by the roadside, under one of three trees that were bending almost double to the storm, but the only shelter for miles around. I was utterly exhausted, and unable to move. Percy was nearly as bad as I was. 'We shall be dead before morning unless help comes!' was the only consolation he could give me.

Suddenly, with a shrieking roar as if all the demons in the lower regions were let loose, one of the trees crashed right across the road. We jumped up—this new scare lending us temporary energy—and got to the weather side of the remaining two. We had no sooner done this when they followed suit. There was then a slight lull in the storm. 'Hark!' I cried, grasping my friend's arm. Sure enough we heard the rumble of wheels coming towards us. If ever the sound of wheels sent joy into any one's heart, it did so then.

We stood at one side of the road and waited, Percy remarking that he would kick the groom out of the trap, and make him walk home or die in the attempt. The trap was alongside of us almost before we could see it, through the darkness. Percy jumped forward, and seized the horse by the head.

'You infernal imp of darkness! where the ——'

He was stopped short by a crack over the head with the butt end of the driver's whip.

'Hulloa!' I cried out; 'who on earth are you?'

'Come on, ye d—d thievin' blayguairds! Jock Thampson's no feer'd o' a dozin o' ye!' was the answer I received.

Seeing our mistake, and keeping clear of the whip handle, I explained, at the top of my voice, who we were and where we were going—at least, trying to do so—and begged 'Jock Thampson,' who turned out to be a farmer from the other side of Whiteford, to give us a lift back to the lodge, promising him anything he cared to ask for that was in our power to give.

'The auld mare canna face that storm,' he said.

'But she'll have to,' I answered, 'as you cannot go any further along the road, as it is blocked a few yards from here!'

He got down, and, satisfying himself that what I said was correct and apologising to poor Percy, who was pretty well knocked out of time by the blow he had received, told us to jump up, and he would see what he could do for us.

Thanking heaven for our timely rescue, as we could not otherwise possibly have survived the night, we climbed into the trap, and, after the poor old mare had felt more whipcord than she cared about, we reached the lodge without further adventure. Thompson's mare was put into a comfortable stall and well cared for, while her master fared as well in the servants' hall.

After hot baths, and stiff glasses of toddy imbibed while we were in them, and then a good dinner washed down with a magnum of Heidsich, we were glad to turn in, and thanked our stars we had a bed to sleep on that night.

The week following I read in the *Perthshire Advertiser*, under the head of 'Sporting News'—

'Shooting.—On the 14th inst., on the lands of Barim, Mr. Percy J—— and Captain —— enjoyed excellent sport, killing 15½ brace of partridges, 3½ brace of grouse, 5 brace of black game, 4 ducks, 2 teal, 12 couple of snipe, besides hares and rabbits, and *one sheep!*'

Too bad, whoever put it in!

SENSATIONAL CRICKET IN 1889.

By SOMERVILLE GIBNEY.

CRICKET, as far as England is concerned, is over for 1889. The last hit has been made, the last ball bowled, and the last catch held. The averages have appeared in the papers, and all the amusement lovers of the game will get from it until next spring, will be a retrospective enjoyment in glancing and talking over the doings of the past few months. And in these chats and discussions over cosy fires, in billiard and smoking-rooms, it will be curious or sensational performances or events that will claim the most attention. Have there been any of these during the past season? Certainly, though perhaps hardly so many as during the previous year. Why this should be so it is hard to say, unless the wetness of the season had something to do with it, and the new rule that came into force, giving a captain the option of declaring the innings of his side over whenever he deemed it expedient, which put a limit to many scores that had all the appearance of becoming gigantic ones had they been allowed to continue. As evidence of the dampness of 1889, it may be mentioned that, including the Whit-Monday match at Lords (Middlesex *v.* Kent), four matches had been abandoned owing to rain up to that time on that ground alone. Afterwards the weather improved, but towards the end of the season wet again predominated, and the averages of many good men came down in consequence. To give examples of the new rule I may mention the match H. M. S. *Britannia v.* Torquay, where the *Britannia* declared their innings over for 202 for 2 wickets, and those of Essex Club and Ground *v.* Elms, and Huntingdon *v.* Godmanchester, where in the former Essex retired with 310 for 2 wickets, and in the latter Huntingdon was satisfied with 355 for 1 wicket. But the most remarkable case in point was the match on the 9th August, when M. C. C. opposed Northumberland, and having lost 1 wicket for 1 run, declared their innings over at 428 for 2 wickets, Attewell having made 200, and Gunn 219 not out. The mention of Gunn's name reminds me that in first-class cricket he heads the batting list this year with an average of 38.7, the result of 38 innings. He has played consistently well all through the season, and wet wickets seem to have had little effect on him. W. G. Grace is not far behind him, and practically heads the amateur averages with 32.20, after 45 innings; Mr. L. Wilson only overtopping him with 36, but the latter only batted 10 times against Grace's 45. There have been one or two curiously sensational incidents as that which happened in the Osberton *v.* Wincobank match on the 15th August, when the former's first wicket fell for 212, and their innings was declared over at 250 for 3 wickets. During this innings H. Foley and the veteran Richard Daft were in together, the former drove a full pitch hard back straight at Daft's head, he put up his bat to save himself, and the ball hitting it was diverted into the bowler's hands. When Wincobank went in Daft captured 9 of their wickets for 23 runs; not bad for an old 'un! Altogether that match was as full of sensation as an egg is of meat. It was also curious how K. J. Key's innings in the Surrey *v.* Leicestershire match on the 30th May was brought to an end. He had made 71 when Lohmann, who was in with him, hit a ball hard; it glanced off Rylott into Key's wicket, who was backing up, and he was in consequence run out. But most curious of all was what happened in the Hampshire *v.* Somersetshire match, which I reproduce, as near as maybe, from *The Field.* While Mr. Radcliffe was batting, an appeal was made for stumping, which Lillywhite answered in favour of the batsman; but he, misunderstanding, left his wicket and walked towards the pavilion. On this Fothergill pulled up a stump and appealed for run out. This time Lillywhite gave him out, but in the meantime Henty, the other umpire, had called 'over.' The ball was therefore dead, and Radcliffe continued his innings. Fothergill, of course, was acting according to the strict letter of the law, but there are doubtless many players who rejoice that his action was ineffective.

Glancing over my rough notes I should say that this year, in spite of the new rule, there have been larger numbers of big scores than last, although last year's M. C. C. score of 735 against Wiltshire has never been approached; and Surrey, opposing Oxford Varsity, could only total 614, against last year's 650. Not confining myself to first-class cricket alone, I can count rather over thirty innings of 400 and above, four of over 500, and one of over 600. To revert for a moment to the Surrey and Oxford Varsity match on 24th June, it was curious that such a big total should have been obtained when we see that three batsmen, K. J. Key, Henderson, and Sharpe, did not make a run between them. In first-class cricket there have been two matches in which both sides scored heavily. The Middlesex *v.* Yorkshire on 20th, 21st, 22nd June (to be mentioned later on for another reason), when Yorkshire made 259 and 388, and Middlesex 368 and 280 for 6 wickets; and Gentlemen and Players on 4th, 5th, 6th July, when Gents made 347 and 225, and Players 396 and 177 for 1 wicket, 1145 runs for 31 wickets; and the Philadelphians (our only visitors this season) *v.* Gentlemen of Surrey, when the Philadelphians scored 458 and 43 for 3 wickets, and Surrey 294 and 355 (W. W. Read 105 and 130), ten out of the Surrey eleven went on to bowl before they could bring their visitors' first innings to a close. There have certainly not been such large individual scores this year as last. In first-class cricket the highest total obtained has been 176, made by both K. J. Key and F. Marchant, but Key obtained his without at last losing his wicket. In general cricket, besides the scores of Gunn and Attewell which I have already mentioned, E. G. Simmonds, playing for Seven Oaks Grammar School *v.* Grove House School, obtained 247 not out, but was not this against school-boy bowling? For really sensational batting we must this year look to T. C. O'Brien, as witness his hitting in the M. C. C. *v.* Yorkshire match at Scarborough on 3rd September, when from two overs of Peel he made 28, four 4's, and two 6's. His complete innings of 96 was compiled in one and half hours, and consisted of two 6's, one 5, fourteen 4's, one 3, seven 2's, and six singles. And in the Middlesex *v.* Yorkshire match on 20th June and following days, when Middlesex went in at 3.25 to make 280 before time, which meant their getting over 80 runs an hour. At last there were 83 still wanted, and only just over three-quarters of an hour remaining. This they accomplished with ten minutes to spare, thanks in a great measure to the hitting of O'Brien, who, besides making 92 in the first innings, made 100 not out in the second in one hour twenty minutes. Another instance of quick scoring is that of Mr. Jones, who, playing for King's School, Ely, *v.* Perse School, Cambridge, on 24th June, made 100 out of 139 in an hour and a quarter. Weymouth Club also scored at a great pace when they made 417 against Balham in three and a quarter hours. To turn from large to small scores in first-class cricket, the smallest total is 35, for which South was dismissed by the North in May, and Notts by Kent later on in the season; but outside the charmed circle we find on the 16th May, Tralee Garrison, after making 258, dismissing the Town eleven for 12, the highest individual score being 4, and on the 18th May St. Charles College (T. C. O'Brien's old school), after making 97, got rid of Shrewsbury Park for 4 (2 only from the bat) and 24. There was a series of precious small scores in the Lancashire *v.* Leicestershire match on 29th August, which only lasted four hours and twelve minutes, Lancashire winning in one innings with 69 runs to spare. The scoring, too, in Kent *v.* Surrey on 22nd and 23rd August was not remarkably free, Kent 48 and 53, Surrey 92 and 11 for no wickets. There have been some close finishes besides the Middlesex and Yorkshire match already twice mentioned. Harrow, thanks in some measure to the admirable and sportsmanlike behaviour of their opponents in not losing a moment's time, beat Eton with fifteen minutes to spare. Surrey beat Yorkshire on 27th August at five minutes to seven, when the gas lamps were lit outside the Oval. Surrey had only another man to go in (M. Read), and he had injured himself, so that he could only have batted with one hand. On the 3rd June Yorkshire snatched a victory from Cambridge Varsity by 11 runs, and on the 22nd July Notts beat Yorkshire by 36. This was the first time this year Notts had not claimed a victory with an innings in hand. So much for the prowess of the bat, now for the ball; and in this department my find is a small one. Lohmann has performed the unique performance of taking over 200 wickets in first-class cricket during the season, and this at the cost of 13.88 per wicket. The bowler who nearest approaches him, and he is a long way behind, is Attewell, with 140 for 11.15, but he bowled in only 42 innings to Lohmann's 48. In the Surrey *v.* Oxford Varsity match already referred to, Sharpe took 5 wickets for 5 runs. And now we must go further afield. In the second innings of Eton in the Winchester match, 7 men were out in 9 overs for 12 runs, which was worse than in their match against Harrow last year. Playing for Middlesex Hospital *v.* Leavesden Asylum on 17th July, H. Newton bowled 5 wickets in 5 consecutive balls, his analysis at the conclusion of the innings reading, 7 wickets, 8 runs. Mr. Horsburgh, for the Refugees, took 4 of the Norton Barrack wickets in 4 successive balls on the 13th June. On the 22nd June, Parker, for Sandbach School, bowled 10 of the Whitchurch Grammar School for 10 runs; and on the 29th May, Lushington, for Highgate School, probably astonished the Hornsey men by bowling their three first representatives with his first three balls.

These are a few of the curious and sensational incidents which have taken place during the past season. I don't say they are all, I doubtless have missed many. To dissect and analyse all the matches that take place during a season is a tolerably big order; and if any reader knows of any not here mentioned, he will probably feel a kind of satisfaction in being a rather more knowing hoss than the writer.

A NOVEL GOLFING MATCH.

By 'A. NIBLICK.'

YOU say Beattie's horse *only* took two minutes to come home in the last four-mile heat from the bend into the straight. Why *only?* I'll bet Sir David Moncrieffe's horse, Negociator, that won the Royal Caledonian Gold Cup last year over the same course, would have come home from the bend in half the time.'

'Yes, I daresay, Melville; but Negociator is a thoroughbred, while this horse of Jack Beattie's is only a half-bred hunter that he has drilled during the whole time the Yeomanry were up, and had no pretensions to galloping.'

'What do you call the distance?' followed this explanation.

'Six furlongs,' was the reply.

'Bah! is that all!' said the other, lighting a fresh cigar. 'I have had a message carried further than that when out in India many a time without a horse.'

'Then you used a pigeon!' suggested the other.

'No, I did not; and I do not mind betting you ten guineas and a dinner for four at the 'Golfer's Arms' that I'll do it on Saturday morning next in ten seconds less time, the message to be brought from the six furlong post to the winning-post.'

'You are joking, man; there is not a man in Edinburgh, or even in old Scotland, who could do the distance in one minute fifty seconds.'

'Take the bet, my boy, and we'll see. You lawyers of the Court of Session do not know everything, and anything smart you do find out is generally from some poor, yet sharp-witted fellow in a witness-box, who could gammon you all if he had the education.'

'Well, then, a bet be it,' said the other, who felt a little annoyed at the sarcastic remarks regarding the bluntness of wit amongst the members of his profession. 'Mind you, whoever carries your message must keep within the regular posts, no crossing the course or that.'

'If the message is carried between the posts I suppose you cannot find any fault,' said the other.

'None whatever.'

'Then find a good check timekeeper if you wish to save your ten guineas, for I mean to win my wager very easily. I will be here at ten o'clock on Saturday morning. Good-night.'

The conversation took place in the club-house of the Ancient Golf Club at Edinburgh sixty years ago. The annual training of the Yeomanry had just taken place, and had been followed by the customary races. Jack Beattie had won the Officer's Cup with a horse which the Edinburgh hunting men declared to be a non-such and a flier, and some had gone so far as to say that it had come in from the bend of the course at the far end in less time than any recorded. Timing races in those days depended much upon the pace made in the four and two-mile heats, and it is possible that cracks like Negociator were never pushed into beating a record by local competitors. At any rate it occurred to Charlie Melville of the Scots Greys, which were then stationed at Piershill Barracks (Jock's Lodge), that the pace mentioned was nothing very extraordinary. Always on the outlook for a wager, it appeared clear that he might make a little towards his mess-bill out of one of these very fat and very fleecing Edinburgh lawyers. Indeed, there was nothing in which he so much delighted as getting on the wrong side of 'legal gentlemen,' because, as he used to explain, 'I have many a time had them on all sides of me.' He was noted in the service as one of the most astute men for laying a drag scent up to a sure and certain catch-bet, and the older officers generally gave the younger ones who had just joined, the tip to keep their weather eye on Melville. These were the great days of catch-bets and peculiar wagers, let it be remembered, and things which would be called sharp now were at that time thought to be quite excusable.

'I wonder how he'll do it,' said the lawyer, John Tailzie, who was one of the leading advocates of the Court of Session. 'He must have one or more fast runners in the regiment, which he means to bring into his use, but even then I cannot see how he will pull it off. One thing is very certain, he will have a good try. Ten pounds is a great deal to him just now, not to speak of the price of the dinner, which I suppose is meant for himself and his friend and fellow whist-partner, Fitzjames, the 'Scotch Grey wi' the red heid,' as the laddies of Portobello call him when they march out, and a genuine Irishman, though of Scottish parentage, the only one with a brogue in the regiment. Saturday morning, however, will soon come, and we'll see.'

That night, whilst John Tailzie, over the walnuts, was telling his friends of the Long Room (the favourite exercising ground of briefless barristers in Scotland) what a grand wager he had got on with Melville of the Greys, all over Jack Beattie's horse and the pace in which it did the last seven furlongs of the Musselburgh course, the astute Melville was busily engaged in the slums of that dirtiest of all golfing centres, Musselburgh, along with his friend Fitzjames. What they were after no one seemed able to conjecture, but it was pretty clear to all that they were up to some mischief. The little golfing howffs were visited in turn, and conversations held with the most noted caddies in hurried whispers at the door. These conversations were generally wound up with the injunctions, 'Keep your mouth shut,' and 'Do not fail me, but be certain to be there.'

Saturday morning came, a bright, breezy morning in May, with the wind blowing fresh from the southward, and so right up the Musselburgh racecourse. A nice, clear, 'caller' morning as the Edinburgh folks say, and the belles of Portobello were to be seen in dozens in front of their bathing-boxes sporting with the white-crested waves, which came tumbling into the beach from the German Ocean. Lug-sail boats were scudding up from Musselburgh to the oyster-beds, there to get hold of the far-famed 'Caller Ou,' after which was named one of our greatest racehorses, and outward-bound ships were shaking out their sails as they flew, with foam at their bows, down past Bonnie Inchkeith.

'But, dear me, what's on at the links,' was the call of one Musselburgher to another as he saw numerous well-known Edinburgh golfers and members of the Yeomanry ride over the Esk Bridge and on to the racecourse.

'There's no a caddie in the place,' another would observe; 'there must be some grand match.'

'I'll wager it's against the officers o' the Greys,' said one, because every one o' them, no' missing the Cornel, has ridden ower frae Jock's Lodge this morning, and that de'il o' a madman, Melville, at the heid o' them. There's something no very canny aboot that lad. I think we'll best gang doun and see.'

And so they did 'gang doun and see,' in such numbers that when the lawyer arrived with his friends there was quite a crowd of two hundred or more, including horsemen, gathered opposite the winning-post, the Grand Stand opposite then being used as the golf club-quarters.

'Where's your runner,' asked Tailzie, as he rode up on a hack, accompanied by Beattie on the very horse which was the cause of all the concern.

'I'll show you that directly,' was the reply; 'but in the meantime, will you have another ten guineas on the result?'

'I will have it,' said Beattie, whose eyes were still red with the wine of the previous evening, and who believed that no message could have been quicker carried than his horse had carried him in the race for the Cup. So the bet was booked.

'Now,' said Melville, 'a message is a message long or short. It may be a volume, or it may be a word, that you'll admit, so long as it is carried within the time and under the conditions of the match.'

'Agreed,' said the other, 'I have no objections to that.'

'Well, then, here is a peg of wood. Write on it the word "Victory," the regimental password last night, in your own handwriting, and put your own initials under it. You have done so. Well,' said Melville, with all the manners of a street conjuror, 'you will observe shortly that I shall place it within this little ball, and if you will come with me,' he said, with a sly twinkle, 'I will show you that it is properly fastened inside.'

He led the way over to the Club-house, where stood the green-keeper and professional, and said, 'Allan, I wish you to fasten this peg of wood into this golf ball so that it will remain fast for at least thirteen or fourteen good drives.' The professional, who had specially manufactured a ball for the purpose, lost no time in doing so, and it was handed to Beattie with the remark, 'You ride up to the bend with this, and place it on the tee opposite the six-furlong post. I will wait here at the winning-post, and Tailzie will pick it up and extract his message. Aitchison here, of Edinburgh, the clockmaker, will keep time from the fall of a red flag, which will announce the departure of the ball in this direction.

Tailzie's complexion assumed the hue of well-watered milk, but he merely remarked to his friend, 'Ride down the line after the ball as hard as you can, Jack, and see that they drive it between the posts and keep to the course.'

'That's all right,' said the other; 'you can't object to the ball being returned if it does go aside, and our taking the course properly.'

There was little danger, however, of the ball being allowed to go wrong, as Beattie early observed. At intervals of fifty yards were stationed laddies, each carrying in their hands small lumps of clay with which to tee the ball when picked up. These were outside the course by the rails. Inside were all the best driving caddies and professionals of Edinburgh, at eighty yards intervals, each with his play club in his hand, and seeming eager and anxious for the novel match to commence. Allan, the green-keeper, had well coached them in their duties, which were not to try to swipe too far, but to send their ball straight up the course to their next neighbour. Behind these drivers were stationed attendant caddies, who were to tee the ball if it lay badly, but to lose not one single second if possible. Of all things to be careful about, they were to try and keep good line.

Beattie had not been longer than five minutes at the post when the flag was seen to fall, and he was observed to come galloping down the course as hard as his famous flier could carry him. But fast as he galloped the golf ball galloped faster. Once only did he catch it up, and that was when midway it rolled outside of one of the posts. Quickly was it thrown back, passed round the post, teed in the centre of the course, and sent flying onward again. Allan the green-keeper was the last man to take it up, and this he did as a chieftain would have seized the fiery cross in the days of old. Not waiting for it to be teed, he lifted it with a clean swing straight up to the inside of the winning-post, where the timekeeper picked it up.

'How much?' asked Tailzie of the latter, anxiously.

'One minute, forty-eight seconds,' was the reply.

'Then I have lost on the post,' was the reply. 'All I can say is that had the wind not favoured you I should have won easily; but here is Beattie. Did they keep the course?'

'Yes,' was the crestfallen reply of the latter. 'I must say that they did not pass outside of a single post.'

'Then we must pay and look pleasant,' said the other, as Allan the green-keeper extracted the little message with the ominous word 'Victory.' 'I did not really think it could have been done without the assistance of horses or pigeons, and certainly never dreamt of this method of sending a message, It certainly is a curious style of play in the links, golfing against time.'

"he lifted it with a clean swing"

see page 288.

OLD PYTCHLEY DAYS.

By Tom Markland.

FROM the 'Golden Burgh' to Daventry, there lies a widespread scene,
Thickly studded with warm coverts, and with great 'grass grounds' between,
That would seem a very paradise to men of 'hound and horn,'
Were it only some leagues further from the confines of the Quorn.
But comparisons are odious, well deserving of all praise
Is the record of the Pytchley in the noble Althorp's days;
Spencer, like to famous Meynell, gave this glorious hunt a start;
Alexander had a Philip, or he'd scarce have played his part.
But the palmy days of Pytchley were when Althorp and Charles King
Made the glades of old Northamptonshire with sylvan echoes ring;
Felton Hervey and Frank Forrester, Dick Gurney and John Cook,
Were among their foremost 'flighters' o'er bullfinch, rail, or brook.
And two Bairds who had been tempted from the classic land of Burns,
Would oft pound the proletariat and claim the brush by turns,
While a brace of bold Hibernians rode well forward in the race,
Ne'er were Lucas and staunch Bruen 'mong the hindmost in the chase;
Hugo Meynell and Charles Knightly, with a host of sportsmen game,
Wrote their names in lasting records of the Pytchley hunting fame;
Peter Allix, known as 'Scratch-face,' for a bullfinch he'd ne'er flinch,
But submit to have his whiskers combed before he'd lose an inch.
With a squadron of such mettle, and a huntsman like Charles King,
And a master like staunch Althorp, 'twould have been a wondrous thing
If they'd failed to show good sport, and oft old Charley bring to hand,
Or around the board if merriment were wanting in the band.
Men still live in rural manors who the jovial nights recall,
When the hours flew fast 'mid jest and laugh, in Pytchley's ancient hall.
Oft would Alvanley from Melton, steal to share their wild 'Halloo!'
While gay Poyntz would come with stores of fun to join the glorious crew.
The great grandson of staunch Highflyer was the huntsman's fav'rite steed,
But his 'Swede' by Agonistes was as famed for wind and speed;
And in turns these two brave coursers bore him through one rasping day,
When as stout a fox as e'er was whelped from Crick was viewed away;
Through Clay-Coten and the Lilburn field the rival riders race,
Nor at Hemplow nor Cold Ashby did he slacken in his pace,

Though for more than sixty minutes now he'd played his gallant part,
There was no more chance of check nor view than when they made the start:
Right across the old-time battle-field whence fled the routed band,
Who around the ill-starred Stuart had so bravely made their stand,
Went the hurly-burly of the chase, though sadly thinned the field,
Cries gay Poyntz, 'That fox will see us "blowed" before his mask he'll yield!'
'You should say he'll see our *horses* "blowed,"' cries Charley, with a grin,
'Still I've faith that old Contingent at the finish will be "in."
Now he's running straight for Marston Wood, I trust those earths are right,
For I'd give a hundred guineas for the varmint's brush this night.'
But the brave old fox disdained the earths at Marston Wood to try,
No! he'd run them to a standstill, or 'in open' he would die.
Yet his strength was fast deserting him, the pace had been too great,
For an hour and seventeen minutes they had ridden hard and straight;
And before the brave old Trojan could the Marston Trussels gain,
His Whoo-oop! was far re-echoed o'er the wide Northampton plain.

* * * * * * *

At odd times the 'metropolitans,' who hailed from Harb'ro side,
Would come southwards just to show the 'Pytchley boys' the way to ride;
But the game the candle was not worth, the Pytchley knew their ground,
So the 'swells' found all their work cut out, the 'collars white' to pound.
Neither gained they more advantage in the interchange of chaff.
Once droll Gurney at the second 'draw' provoked a roaring laugh,
When the Melton men had ridden straight one merry morn in March,
Dickey swore '*They couldn't turn with such a collar full of starch!*'

* * * * * * *

If you meet an aboriginal, in vein to spin a yarn,
He will tell you how staunch Lucas, 'gainst his will, baptized a barn,
'Twas a rasper for the 'Pytchley boys' one short December's day:
At the finish Lucas left his nag full half a mile away,
And before he'd broken up his fox, the night was dark as pitch,
So a toilsome tramp to Pytchley he began o'er hedge and ditch;
Wet and weary, on he pounded, till he reached this humble shed,
Where the huntsman and the panting pack were fain to make their bed.

* * * * * * *

These, no doubt, were Pytchley's palmy days, but all things 'neath the moon
To vicissitudes of fortune are submitted late or soon,
So this far-famed club in course of time was thinned by blow on blow.
Some 'departed,' and the remnant with advancing years grew slow;

Some obeyed the call of duty, went to fight on foreign strand,
And the worst we wish the Pytchley, is that such another band
May in course of time their country grace and make their woodlands ring,
As bestrode their pastures in the wake of Althorp and Charles King.

A LUCKY DEAL.

By 'CINQFOIL.'

'THERE is no way out of it that I can see except to cut down everything all round,' remarks Tom Milner to himself, as he looks disconsolately at a rough-and-ready balance sheet he has been making with a stump of pencil on the fly leaf of a book as he stands with his back to the fireplace in his rooms in Bury Street, and smokes his after-breakfast cigar. A letter from his agent, informing him of the increasing difficulty of collecting the rents of his few farms, and of the utter impossibility of letting 'The Grange' until some money has been laid out on repairs, coming shortly after the settlement of a badish book on the Two Thousand, has caused him to resolve the whole house, consisting of himself and a fox-terrier, into a committee of ways and means. The result is not satisfactory, and the resolution of his mental chancellor of the exchequer is expressed as quoted above.

Tom Milner, though brought up to lead a more or less idle life, has a righteous horror of getting into debt, and so sets to work resolutely to see how the retrenchment he has resolved upon is to be carried out. A long pause ensues, while he smokes on steadily, his face getting longer and longer each minute, to the no small astonishment of 'Jock,' who lies on the rug with his nose laid flat on his paws, and opens one eye occasionally to see when his customary morning game of play is to begin.

'Well, matters are not so bad as I expected. I must give up keeping a horse in town, and get some cheaper rooms, and then old Heard can have all the rent he can get in for doing those cursed repairs. I don't like selling the little mare, but there is no help for it, and to Tattersall's Lassie must go. It's an awful bore, I shall never again get another as good. Well, Jock, we'll go down to Albert Gate and see about getting a box for her,' he remarks aloud as he takes up the *Morning Post*, and glances down the list of horses for sale.

Jock the terrier jumps up all alert and eager for a start, and stands watching him, his little stump of a tail quivering with excitement; but he is doomed to disappointment for a time. An advertisement catches his master's eye.

> WANTED TO PURCHASE, a perfect lady's hack and hunter, about 15·2; sound, up to weight, with perfect manners and gentle paces. Must also go well in single harness. Good price given. Address, stating age, height, colour, and price, to Mrs. K., care of Mitchell's Library, Bond Street.

'I have a great mind to answer that,' Tom thinks to himself, and promptly sits down and writes the following letter:—

> '189 *Bury Street, St. James's.*
>
> 'Mr. Thos. Milner desires to sell a bay mare, by Uncas, dam by Irish Birdcatcher, 15·2½ high; seven years old, warranted sound, fast, and a brilliant fencer. Has perfect manners, and has been hunted by a lady. Up to fourteen stone. Mr. Milner is selling her solely because he is giving up keeping horses. Price 180 guineas.
>
> '*May* 12*th*, 1886.'

This letter having been duly dispatched, Jock is rewarded for his patience by a walk down to Albert Gate.

* * * * * *

A shaded lamp casts its light on a tall, slightly built girl about twenty years of age, who sits in a low chair sipping her tea after dinner, and opening a formidable bundle of letters. Mrs. Kinlock's advertisement has produced a large number of replies, which she has handed over to her daughter to deal with. She is absorbed in her task, and reads letter after letter with a quiet smile, putting them aside in two heaps, those rejected at first sight, and those which are worth further consideration. The former heap increases rapidly.

'Why, mamma, what geese they must think us!' she exclaims, as her mother enters the room.

'Who, my dear?'

'The people who have horses to sell. They write the most extraordinary letters, offering the most wonderful creatures you can imagine, with every known virtue, and at all sorts of prices. Most of them seem to have been going in tradesmen's carts or something of that kind.'

'At any rate, I shall see you have a safe horse this time. You must be very careful in future, my pet,' replied Mrs. Kinlock, putting her arm lovingly round her fair daughter's waist. 'You had a very narrow escape before, and might have been seriously hurt.'

'Yes, mamma, I know,' replied the girl, bending over the letters to hide the flush which rose unbidden to her cheek. 'This seems the most promising of them all,' she adds, handing Tom Milner's letter to her mother.

After some correspondence between Mrs. Kinlock and Tom Milner, and after a favourable report had been made by the vet, Lassie is transferred to Mrs. Kinlock's stables.

* * * * * *

Tom Milner sits alone in his chambers that night; he lights a pipe and takes up a novel, while Jock curls himself up in his lap. After lazily turning over a page or two Tom falls to musing over the loss of his mare. He thinks with regret how he will no more hear her impatient whinnie as he opens the door of her box, and no more feel her firm, smooth neck as she sniffs at his pockets one after the other to discover in which is hidden the expected bit of sugar. Then his thoughts go back to their last day's hunting.

He had boxed her down to Aylesbury in February for a day with the Bicester. How clearly it all came back to his mind! The fuss at the station, the saddling and polishing up at 'The George,' and the jog along the road to covert. The moment hounds are thrown in a whimper, followed by a crash, set all the field hurrying right and left to secure a start, but hurry as they may a forbidding fence with only a hunting gate in it gives the hounds time to settle on the line. How they race over the deep holding pastures of the Vale! What a spin that was! Heads up and sterns down they race for many minutes. The field tail off, leaving only a few who are not to be denied, riding fairly to them. They check for a few moments near some houses, but hit off the line again and hunt steadily on. The field come up once more as hounds disappear into a long, irregular-shaped wood, where they turn short, and the increased music tells once more that they are on terms with their fox. Over the open again for a few fields, and then up one hedgerow and down another, running with their bristles up, they look like a kill. A sudden check beside a long, straggling, double fence. 'Give them room, *please*, gentlemen!' cries the huntsman as the field come panting and streaming up. A twang of the horn, and they cast themselves back. Suddenly Linkboy feathers by the fence, his bristles go up, and he flings himself impetuously into a dense mass of brambles. 'Tally ho!' resounds from the other side of the fence. The pack force their way tumultuously through the briers with a cry that might be heard for miles, and they stream away after their fox down the other side of the fence. A few moments' racing, a sharp turn at the corner, and Druid and Restless are rolling over and over with the fox in the ditch, while the rest fling themselves upon them pell-mell, so that the huntsman has much ado to rescue his fox from among them, torn almost to tatters.

Twenty-one minutes from the find. A good beginning, rendering still more unsatisfactory by comparison the long tedious draw which succeeds it. Both men and horses become tired and irritable from waiting. At last a welcome halloa fills them all once more with animation. Tom Milner turns short up a ride in the wood, gallops on a hundred yards, and waits only to find he has made a wrong cast. Getting out of covert as quickly as he can, he makes his way straight for the caps he can see bobbing along at a distance with several enclosures between them. A turn may put him right once more, so he takes firmly hold of Lassie and sends her along. Suddenly his ear catches the sound of hoofs behind him, and a big raking chestnut dashes past him with the bit in his teeth, completely out of the control of the young girl on his back, who nevertheless sits steadfastly in her saddle, and does her best to regain the mastery. Tom catches a glimpse of her white, scared face as she flashes past him. There is no one else in sight, and he can see at a glance that the chestnut has the legs even of his favourite Lassie, and carries, moreover, four stone less weight, so Tom prudently shears off to a distance so as to avoid further maddening the runaway, and sends the mare along as hard as she can go in order to be ready to help when a chance may occur. A stake and bound fence lies before them, and he watches the slender figure straighten up and the elbows squared as the girl makes a gallant effort to steady her horse at his leap. Over they go in safety, the chestnut covering twenty feet of ground in his stride. By Jove, she can ride,' is Tom's comment as he watches them. He gets over all right, and, being favoured by the ground, gains a little, though not much. The chestnut has his head stuck out now in an awkward, dangerous manner that looks very like mischief. They near a tall double fence, such as is peculiar to the Vale, and the chestnut, throwing up his head, rushes wildly at it. A faint cry reaches Tom as they crash into the thorns and disappear from view. In another instant Tom is up and off his horse. He forces his way into the fence. There, between the two hedges, lies the chestnut struggling violently to free himself from the strong briars which hold him fast, while underneath him lies his rider, vainly endeavouring to get clear. Tom seizes her by the shoulders, and, exerting all his strength, drags her out at a moment when the horse in his struggles lightens the weight for a second or two.

'Are you much hurt?' he asks, as he gently deposits her on the grass.

'No, I don't think so, only shaken,' she replies with a gasp as she sits up, supporting herself with difficulty on her hands.

A glance at her ashy pale face convinces Tom she is going to faint, and frightens him horribly. He rushes to his saddle for his flask, in which there is fortunately a little drop of whiskey and water still left. This he insists on her drinking up, and thus averts the much-dreaded catastrophe. Leaving her sitting on the grass, he turns his attention to extricating the horse, whose struggles have now completely worn out his strength. Having with much difficulty got him on his legs and clear of the fence, Tom begins to consider what is to be done next, and cuts short her thanks by asking how far she has to go home, and where he can get a carriage.

'I think I can manage to ride home very well, thank you,' she says, 'if you will kindly put me up. I have only about three miles to go, and I feel much better now.'

'Your horse is far too lame to be ridden. He has knocked himself about a good deal, I fear.'

'Oh, I hope not! but I think I can walk. Won't you go on and catch the hounds? I shall manage very well now.'

'You are too much shaken to walk so far,' Tom replies, ignoring the latter part of the question; 'but if you really feel well enough to ride I will soon change the saddles, if you don't mind riding my mare; she is perfectly steady, and I will bring on your horse.'

After some expostulation this is agreed to, being really the only thing left to be done, as no help seems at hand. The change is soon effected, and, as he lifts her to the saddle, Tom notices how charming is the fair oval face with its small, firm mouth, and clear, brown eyes.

'Are you sure you can manage to ride?' Tom asks, as he notices her lips tightly compressed with pain as he put her up.

'Yes, I think so,' she replies; 'at any rate, I *must*,' she adds, after a pause, with an attempt at a smile.

The chestnut is very lame, and the darkness is rapidly growing upon them before they turn into a neat drive, and reach a quiet, comfortable house. They have been very silent for the last mile, the effort of talking being painful to both of them; for, truth to tell, Tom got a bad kick on the knee in the scuffle, and walks with difficulty. Arrived at the house, all is confusion directly, for the girl, whose pluck alone has kept her up during the ride home, faints away the moment she is indoors. Tom, hating all scenes, and being conscious of being of no further use, slips off quietly to the stables, gets the saddles changed, and rides off at once, congratulating himself at having escaped from the thanks which he knew would have been showered upon him. He reaches town late, and, feeling very stiff and sore, tumbles into bed as quickly as he can, only to dream of the fair face he had seen so close to his own amongst the struggling hoofs as he forced his way into the thorns. He wakes next morning to find the injury to his knee worse than he expected, and such as to keep him indoors for several weeks. He has never seen the fair stranger before or since, and has no notion who she is; but her beauty haunts him perpetually, and especially to-night, when the events of that day are so forcibly recalled to his mind on parting with the mare, his partner in the adventure.

'What a pretty girl she was, and what a rare plucky one, too!' he mutters to himself as he gets up, disturbing Jock from his slumbers. 'Bedtime, Jock,' he remarks, as he lights a candle and disappears.

* * * * * *

Next morning Tom sallies forth for a walk in the park. He saunters up beside the Row and turns to lean on the rails. His attention is fixed on a fine, weight-carrying bay which is cantering slowly up the ride, when a stout, middle-aged lady, accompanied by a little girl, comes to the rails a yard or so from him, and a young lady pulls up her horse alongside to speak to them.

CUTHBERT BRADLEY.

'Over the rails by the Row.'

see page 297.

'She is perfectly delightful, mamma! I knew she would be!' is her exclamation, as she pats her glossy shoulder.

'I am so glad you like her,' is the mother's reply. 'I hope she is quite steady,' she adds, as the mare reaches impatiently at her bridle.

Tom Milner, whose back has been turned towards them, is in the act of moving away to speak to a friend when a gentle whinnie close to his ear, and a black muzzle thrust sharply against his shoulder, causes him to start round. 'Oh, I am so sorry, I beg——' he hears as he raises his hat to the rider, while he pacifies his old favourite by stroking her nose. As their eyes meet the words die away on the girl's lips, and a deep flush rises over her face as she turns, after a moment's pause, and says, 'Mother, this is the gentleman who helped me home.'

Tom has now to endure the thanks he escaped before, and which are interrupted by Lassie's determination to be taken notice of by her former master.

'Why, you must be Mr. Milner!' exclaims Miss Kinlock, realising at last how matters stood. 'I felt sure I knew the dear little mare, but could not recollect where I had seen her before.'

An invitation to lunch follows, is accepted, and this chance acquaintance soon improved, so that Lassie got many a biscuit and bit of sugar over the rails in the Row before the season ended.

* * * * * * *

Summer passes away, and autumn is well advanced. Lassie stands once more in her old familiar box at Milne Grange. Suddenly she pricks up her ears, and stamps up her straw with excitement, as she catches the sound of well-known footsteps.

The box door opens, and Mr. and Mrs. Milner enter, fresh from their wedding tour. Lassie whinnies with delight, and rubs her nose against first one and then the other as she greedily munches the biscuits they have brought her.

'No! you shall never be sold again, you darling!' exclaims Mrs. Milner, gaily.

'Though the last was *a lucky deal*,' replies her husband.

'Yes, for both of us.'

HOW JIM KILLED THE BEAR.

A Cowboy's Tale.

By G. H. Jalland.

JIM! Jim! a bear, Jim—m—m!' yelled an excited and almost breathless boy, as mounted on a steaming pony he dashed up to the half-open door of the Beaver ranche. 'Jim, a bear—a great bear!' he again shouted, as he reined his steed on to its haunches and brought it to a standstill.

'Hallo, kid! what's up now? a bear?' questions Jim from his seat near the stove, where he was busily engaged in plaiting a quirt from some long strips of raw hide.

'Yes, Jim, yes; a bear has downed a colt and is chawing it up. Oh, Jim, I daren't go back to the herd; do come and shoot him. Oh, Jim, and he's a great bear,' replies the boy.

'Come, kid, slow up a bit,' says Jim, coming to the door; 'do you mean to tell me you've seen a bear, and he's now mealing off one of our colts?'

'Yes, Jim, it's true, and it's old Betsy's colt too. Oh, Jim, come and shoot him quick for I daren't go back,' implores the trembling horse herder.

Jim said nothing more, but turned into the hut; in less than half a minute he came out again swearing like a 'bull-whacker.'

'That dog-garned young son of a gun, Ted, has got my six-shooter again; I'll put a bullet into the young devil's hide some day, that I will, certain; he's for ever borrowing my pistol to pot at jack-rabbits—I'll jack-rabbit him when I catch him, the young ——.'

Expecting Jim would now decline the unequal contest, the boy again begins, 'Oh, Jim, you will come and help me, won't you, Jim? he'll eat the whole herd, he'll ——'

'Now, kid, just you give us a rest; I reckon I shall have to interview that beast, though the Beaver Company didn't hire me to kill vermin; but my gal down at Cheyenne wants a bear-muff, and, Jim my boy, I guess she'll have it,' says he, partly to himself and partly to the boy, as they crossed over to the stables where two or three ponies were stalled. Jim selects a stout-built bay for his mount, who evinces a decided inclination to hump his back and 'jump' when Jim 'sinches' the saddle on his back.

'Whoa, you brute, you would—would you?' Three or four sharp cuts here descend across the animal's nose, which makes him think better of his intention, and allows Jim to finish saddling and mount him without further bother.

'Now, kid, where did you leave the herd,' he says, turning to the boy, who, seeing that Jim is really going back with him, has somewhat recovered from his fright.

'Down on Cottonwood, Jim, near the pine coulee; the bear came out of the bushes by the watering-place,' he answers.

'All right,' responds Jim, jobbing in the spurs; and starting his pony the beast gives three or four vicious bucks, though hardly stirring his rider's seat, and then relapses into a flying gallop.

Away they go, splashing through the Beaver creek, and tearing up the opposite bank, clattering across the stony hills, leaving clouds of dust behind them; they take a bee line for Cottonwood, which is about three miles distant from the ranche; as they fly along the boy shouts further details of his adventure. Soon they reach the crest of the divide which slopes to the creek below, and there, scattered about whinnying and calling to one another, evidently greatly disturbed, they see the herd. They ride on until a sudden dip in the prairie reveals something that makes Jim exclaim, 'By Gum, kid, you're quite right, it is a bear, and no waster neither. Who-whoop! now for the bear-muff! Do you like bear-steak, kid?' he shouts, stinging up his pony, and laughing over his shoulder at the boy, who evidently begins to think he is quite near enough for his own safety, and begins to rein in his pony; for they are now within four hundred yards of the bear.

'Come on, kid, come on,' laughs Jim, as he begins to unfasten his lariat from the horn of his saddle.

'Oh, Jim, you're not going to rope him? Don't, Jim, don't for heaven's sake; he'll do for you certain,' implores the again frightened boy.

'Why, kid, roping bears is just as easy as swimming when you know how to do it. Why when I was your age I'd lassoed seventy-nine full-grown bears, to say nothing of thirteen cubs,' laughs Jim, who has now slowed his pony into a walk to let him catch his wind; they are now within a hundred yards of the scene of the tragedy.

There crouching over the dead body of a foal is a huge, gaunt bear, the outline of his bones clearly to be seen even through his long shaggy hair. He has evidently not yet recovered from his winter's fast. And see, there is the bereaved mare wildly dashing backwards and forwards, lashing out as she passes the bear, who merely dodges to escape the hoofs, and then continues his bloody feast; he has noticed the approach of the horsemen, but beyond a couple of glances from his small beady eyes he takes no further notice of them. But now Jim's pony refuses to advance further (the boy had stopped some distance back), Jim cuts him cruelly with his keen quirt, his bleeding flanks are scored again and again with the sharp spurs, but no nearer to the bear will he be driven; now he darts to one side, now to the other; he tries to turn, but the powerful bit holds him straight; finally he stands stock still, snorting and trembling. Jim slashes and digs until he sees it is no further use, then he dismounts, unties his handkerchief from his neck, and blindfolds the pony with it. He next remounts, and wheeling the pony sharply round two or three times, rides him straight for the bear; the wind is blowing from the horse to the bear, so the former cannot scent his danger, and though in a perspiration of fear, he answers to the spurs step by step. Now they are within twenty yards of the beast, who stops his feeding and eyes them suspiciously; now fifteen, Jim begins to whirl his lariat round his head—the bear continues to watch them, but makes no movement; now ten, in a second the whirring rope leaves Jim's hand, and the well-cast noose drops round the bear's neck. So far things have gone exactly as Jim wished, but now the infuriated bear, with an angry roar, dashes straight at the horse and rider; in a moment the pony wheels, getting his legs tangled up in the rope, commences plunging and kicking, becoming more and more entangled, until finally he comes heavily to the ground, falling right across his rider's right leg. The bear has also managed to get the rope twisted round himself several times during the *mêlee*, and when the horse falls he is held by the shortness of the tangled rope close up to the animals hind quarters, and could not now if he wished relinquish

G. H. H. Jalland.

"And made a stroke at my leg."

see page 301.

the encounter, so he commences to wreak his vengeance by tearing and clawing the poor pony, who cannot kick and defend himself, so tightly is he wound up in the rope. Jim is also in an unenviable position, for try as he can he fails to get free from his fallen pony ; he begins to wish he had not gone bear-hunting with a lasso, and comes to the conclusion 'That gal down at Cheyenne can pull along without a bear-muff if I can only once get out of this mess.'

The boy, who up to this time had kept at a respectful distance, now seeing the bear is fast, rides his pony as near as he can to the prone combatants and shouts, 'Jim, old man, your're bear-meat certain ; what am I to do to help you ? I told you what'd happen. Oh, Jim, what can I do ?'

'Ride back to the camp and see if that darned skunk has got back with my pistol ; ride fast, kid, ride fast !' replied Jim, in rather excited tones for Jim.

Now whether that bear understood English or not is really more than I can say, but Jim affirms he's certain he could, for to tell the rest of the story in his words, he said : 'No sooner had I spoke them words about sending for my six-shooter, than the critter stopped mauling my horse and looked at me as much as to say, "I reckon we two will have a little fun together before you get to using that pistol of yours." Then the cuss made a movement towards me—I began to say my prayers ; he came a little nearer, I began to wonder what it felt like being eaten ; his eyes flashed and he looked awful cross. "That's darned lucky," says I, as the brute was jerked up by the rope and prevented from coming closer ; how he did pull and strain, half lifting the pony over in his efforts to get at me, but I expect he was kinder weak, and the stout raw hide held him fast. I was just thinking myself safe and all right when the beast reached out a paw and made a stroke at my leg ; he tore my boot from top to bottom and slightly scratched my heel, so I thought I'd better move my leg a little further away ; he made another stroke but missed me this time, and tore the horse's side. The brute then set to pulling at the rope again, and I'll be darned if he did'nt get a bit more play, for when he made another paw at me he hooked his onery claws into my shirt and almost stripped me. He was just savage that bear was, his mouth was full of blood, foam, and teeth—and mighty big white teeth they were—his little eyes glowed like fire, and I thought if he came much closer

I should begin to think bear-hunting was poor fun after all; but closer he did come, there seemed no limit to the giving powers of that lariat. "Eugh, you darned brute," I said, as he drew his long claws, like a big mane-comb, down my naked back, "that's sharpish work old man, don't do it again;" but no, not he, he took no notice, and did it again; you might think I was lying still all this time, but you just bet I wasn't, for every time my pony struggled, and he did it pretty often, I got my leg a little more from under him, and just as my friend the bear was going to commence another ploughing operation down my bleeding back, I managed to draw my leg away, leaving my boot under the saddle. Well, boys, I was that aggravated with the bear, that when I once got away from his close company, I went straight into the brush and got myself a thick club, rather long, as you might expect. Some kind-hearted people might think I was'nt going to hurt that poor tied-up bear, but if any man living could have found a bit of sound meat in that cussed brute's carcase by the time the kid galloped up with my pistol, why I'd have been willing to give him a dollar an ounce for it. Yes, boys, I did pound that bear, and I reckon if the pistol hadn't come when it did, to put him into the happy hunting grounds, he'd soon have worried himself there, for he fumed and fretted something dreadful during that hiding. My gal down at Cheyenne got her furs, but when I offered the kid a steak of bear-meat, he said he reckoned he wasn't used to having his grub ready mashed for him, as his teeth were still pretty good.'

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

MR. HENRY HEATH, of Oxford Street, has just introduced an admirably-contrived *Hunting Kit Bag* that is worthy of notice. One of its recommendations is, a good, strong, simple fastening that cannot fail; and it possesses other useful improvements upon bags hitherto made for hunting men. The rich dark maroon leather used in its manufacture is a decidedly new feature, and will doubtless commend itself as an improvement upon the usual tan shade.

A collection of *Holiday Sporting Stories*, by Finch Mason, which have appeared from time to time in the *Illustrated Sporting* *and Dramatic News*, have just been issued in a popular form by TRISCHLER & CO., New Bridge Street, E.C. The crisp and sparkling style of this favourite author (which is so well known) is maintained all through this small volume, which will be found to be the very thing to dissipate the monotony of a railway journey.

Messrs. MUSGRAVE & CO, of Bond Street, have brought out a combined *Saddle Rack and Saddle Stand*, the invention of Major Fisher, late of the 21st Hussars. It is eminently practical, will be found useful in either large or small establishments, and invaluable to officers of the mounted branches of the service. It takes up no permanent ground space, being suspended from pulleys attached to the ceiling, but when lowered to the floor, it stands firmly on four legs, and can thus be used as a saddle-stand or harness-cleaning horse. It folds up flat into a small space when not in use or packed for removal, and is light, strong, and moderate in price. By its use saddles are rapidly dried, thus preventing the inroads of moths, &c.

The Habits of the Salmon, by John P. Traherne, will be appreciated by fishermen. It is written by an angler of long and varied experience, and treats exhaustively of the subject from a practical and economical point of view. Chapman & Hall are the publishers.

PURILINE is the name given to a tooth polish, and tooth paste, recently introduced by the proprietor of 'Bunter's Nervine.' It is decidedly pleasant to use, and is accompanied by medical and other testimonials, not only recommending it for ordinary teeth cleaning purposes, but also for removing the unpleasant odour of tobacco from the mouth. Smokers should note this!

A VERY good selection of poems has been compiled by Frederick Langridge, M.A., and published by Methuen & Co., entitled *Ballads of the Brave.* The very best authors have been laid under contribution, and due prominence given to those who treat upon the subjects of chivalry, enterprise, and courage. Among the poems connected with sport the best are 'The Galloping Squire,' 'The Doncaster St. Leger,' and 'The Boat Race.'

MR. N. W. APPERLEY has compiled *The Nimrod Game-Book*, thus named after his famous grandsire, 'Nimrod, most renowned of Sporting Authors.' Originally designed for his own use, he has been induced by the solicitation of friends (who detected in it points of superiority over many other game-books, notably in the enlarged spaces devoted to the disposal of game, general remarks, names of the party, arrangement of the game-headings, &c.) to reproduce the same, and has entrusted its publication to Webster & Co., Piccadilly.

ACCIDENTS to ladies in the hunting field have been so rife of late that we have much pleasure in drawing the attention of ladies of sporting proclivities to the *Eclipse Safety Habit Skirt*, invented by Messrs. Gandy & Son, of 9 George Street, Bath. Like most good things it is simplicity itself, the skirt being so fastened to the fair wearer's leg that, in the event of a fall, there is no possibility of its catching in *any part of the saddle*. After that, what more could we say in its praise?

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Size, 30 by 14 inches. Coloured Print, £1 11*s.* 6*d*

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By A. C. HAVELL.

Companion to the above. Here we see 'Charley stealing out of cover. So also does the Whip, who is holding up his hand to warn the advancing field against heading him.

Size and price the same as above.

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Shows Hounds streaming out of covert, with the Huntsman emerging therefrom, followed by an impatient field, to whom he turns, with uplifted hand, imploring them not to overrun the hounds. Two ladies in a mail phaeton have pulled up to see the sport.

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